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HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

CHARLES M. SHELDON



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HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

OR

Christian Stewardship

BY

CHARLES M. SHELDON

*Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifixion of Phillip Strong,"
"Robert Hardy's Seven Days," Etc.*

CHICAGO

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TYPOGRAPHY BY JOHN A. ULRICH, CHICAGO

PREFACE.

"His Brother's Keeper" was written during the winter of 1895 and first read, one chapter at a time, on successive Sunday evenings to my congregation in the Central Church.

The scenes in the mining region are based upon events which occurred during the great strike among the iron miners in the summer of 1895, and which were witnessed by the author.

The Salvation Army songs are exact copies of songs actually sung by the army.

CHARLES M. SHELDON.

TOPEKA, KAN., Central Church, 1896.

Gift from William Welch 6-6-58

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School of Theology
at Claremont

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HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT STRIKE.

THEY say five thousand men have gone out of the Champion and De Mott mines this morning," said one of the passengers in the train to the young man in the seat by him, as they slowly drew up to the station.

"I wonder if that is so?" replied his companion. "There seems to be something unusual going on. Well, good-by. This is my home. I shall soon know all about it."

The young man caught up his traveling bag and hurried out upon the platform.

The station was entirely deserted, except by a few of the railroad employees. The young man looked around a moment as if expecting some one, and then walked hastily across the platform and around the corner of the station. From the side of the building the town and the public square were in full view. And as they came in sight the passenger gave an exclamation of wonder.

The public square was a small park with a band stand in the middle of it. It was situated at the meeting point of several streets, each of which seemed to

wander down the hills from the different mining districts; starting first as a foot-path trod by the miners, then developing into a piece of country road, adding on fragments of wooden sidewalks as it approached the town, and finally growing into a street with paving and cement walks, and stores and office buildings on either side. Directly in front of the band stand, facing the park, stood a large church, which with its lot occupied the entire space between two streets. The railway station formed one side of the heptagon made by the converging of the seven streets. Another church building, two streets from the other, formed another side. The rest of the buildings fronting the park were stores, offices of various mining companies, and a large hotel.

Into this center of the heart of the mining town of Champion on this particular morning, in the year of our Lord 1895, was gathered the largest crowd Stuart Duncan ever saw there. This young man was the son of Ross Duncan, owner of the largest mines in Champion. He was thirty years old, had finished his college education, and was just home this morning from a year's trip in Europe. As he came down from the railway station platform and pushed his way into the crowd, he said to himself that in all his travels abroad he had not seen anything to compare with the remarkable gathering in this mining town where he had been reared previous to his college life in the East.

The minute he stepped into the crowd several voices called out, "Stuart, lad, give us your hand! Glad to see you back!" The voices were in different tones and various degrees of brogue, Cornish, Finn, English, Irish, Scotch. He noticed the subdued action of the men.

They were excited, but under control. The band stand was crowded with familiar faces, but Stuart Duncan looked at only one. That was the face of a short but muscular young man who was standing with head uncovered upon the bench which ran around the inside of the stand. He had thick black hair, deep-set black eyes, heavy eyebrows, large features, smooth face, and short, round neck. He stood leaning forward a little, his left hand around one of the supports to the roof of the stand, his right holding an old hat which moved gently up and down.

Stuart moved up nearer the stand until he was within easy speaking distance. As he crowded in closer he was finally stopped by the great pressure of the men. Several voices greeted him, but all of them quietly, and the interest of the gathering seemed centered in the figure that stood leaning out a little over the crowd.

"What's it all about? What's the trouble?" asked Stuart of the men around him. "What's Eric doing up there?"

Before any one could reply, the young man standing on the bench began to speak. His words came very slowly, as if every one of them was being thought out carefully. He stopped every motion of his body and stood perfectly still. The great crowd in the square was so quiet that Stuart thought for a second of a scene he once witnessed in an English cathedral when four thousand people were kneeling just before a special service began.

"Brothers," said the speaker, whom Stuart had called "Eric," "this is no ordinary movement in the history of labor. What we have done and what we are about to do is of the most serious consequence. We

have made a demand for wages such as will sustain us and our families this winter in comfort. It has been refused, and we have come out of the mines determined to make a peaceful but resistless protest for the rights of our manhood." The speaker paused a moment, and Stuart noticed the hand around the post tighten its grip. Then he continued. The quiet of the crowd was, if possible, more deep than before.

"Brothers, we need more than human wisdom at such a time as this. It is fitting that we bow our heads and implore divine aid." Every head in the square was uncovered as the speaker's voice rang out clear and strong over the crowd:—

"Lord, we need thy help to-day. We ask for wisdom. Grant us to know thy will. O Lord! keep us from committing any lawless act. Keep every man here from drunkenness and violence to property or life. We want simply our rights as men. We want wages sufficient to live in comfort. Show us what to do. Keep us to-day from evil. Bless all men who work with their hands. Bless our families. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen." *

The speaker lifted his head and the miners put on their hats. Stuart looked out over the heads of the crowd and up at the man who had just prayed and then out beyond him to the pine-covered hills dotted over with the engine houses and stock piles of ore. He noticed the smoke curling from the furnace stacks and said to

* This incident is based on fact. The writer of this story was witness to a gathering of iron miners in the great strike of July, 1895, where one of the miners offered just such a prayer as the above, at Negaunee, Mich., July 24, 1895.

himself, "The pumps are going yet." The whole scene was very vivid to him. The crowd, the churches, the park, the stand, that familiar face and figure up there, the hills, the mines, the whole with its strong setting of human interest smote him almost with a shock. And at the very nerve center of the shock was that brief prayer. It was so strange, so unusual, so like a story, so unlike real life.

Eric was speaking again. He was making an appeal to the miners to commend their cause to the world by their conduct. He spoke, as before he had prayed, very slowly and carefully. Toward the end of his speech he caught sight of Stuart.

His face flushed for an instant. The eyes of the two men met. The look on each man's face seemed to say, "I wonder if he is still the same?"

A clock in the steeple of the larger of the two churches struck eight. Eric jumped down from the bench and another miner took his place and spoke in a more impassioned manner to the men. There were cheers and swinging of hats. Stuart gradually worked his way out of the crowd, stopped frequently by acquaintances. At last he had come out in front of the church with the clock in the tower, looking about him eagerly for some one from his own home, when a strong voice from a man standing on the church steps above him exclaimed:—

"Say, Stuart, when did you join the strike?"

"Doctor!" cried Stuart eagerly, with a smile of welcome that lighted up his thoughtful face wonderfully, "next to father and Louise, you are the very person I wanted to see most. Where are they? They were to

meet me at the train this morning. Isn't this a most astonishing affair? Tell me all about it."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "You know as much about it as I do. The men went out this morning without notice. The Freeport, Vasplaine, and De Mott miners are all here with the Champion men. They walked over from the lower range early this morning."

"What do the men want?" Stuart asked vaguely. He had so many questions to put he asked the first that occurred.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders again.

"The contract miners want two dollars a day, the trammers one seventy-five, and the men at the top one fifty."

"Who is the leader of the men?"

"You see for yourself; Eric Vassall. And it seems only yesterday that you two men were young kids in knickerbockers tumbling down the mines and worrying the life out of the companies because of your pranks. And now Eric is the leader of the biggest strike on record among miners, playing the role of prophet and priest and I don't know what all, and you"—

"And I," interrupted Stuart with another smile as he pulled the doctor down off the step above him, "I am—so far—nobody, until I have had my breakfast. I can't understand where father and Louise can be. Haven't you seen them this morning?"

"No. Get into my buggy. I will take you up to the house."

The doctor's office fronted on the square and his horse stood near by. Stuart gave one glance back at the crowd as he and the doctor started up the street.

"It is a remarkable scene. I have not witnessed anything like it abroad. I have seen several strikes in England and Germany and France since I have been away. But I never knew a strike to be opened with prayer, did you, doctor?"

"No," replied the doctor dryly.

Stuart looked at him. He was driving, as always, with one foot outside the buggy, the lines gathered up in a careless way in one hand and the horse tearing along like mad up the sandy, red, iron-ore street, for they were off the paving now and going up a sharp grade cut through one of the numerous hills that surrounded the town. The doctor always drove that way, and a ride with him was as exciting, Stuart used to say, as working in a powder mill during a thunderstorm.

"Why? Don't you think the prayer was sincere?" Stuart asked.

"Sincere enough. But pshaw! What's the use? We all know how the strike will end, prayer or no prayer."

"What's happened to Eric, doctor? He never used to be religious. Not that way."

"Salvation Army," replied the doctor briefly.

"Oh!" Stuart looked puzzled; but he thought he would have it all out with Eric. There was so much to talk over since they had parted a year ago. So many grave questions had arisen in their lives that needed to be discussed. He was growing anxious, as they drove along, concerning his father and sister. It was very strange that they had not met him at the station. But the strike and all might have kept his father; it was a different home-coming from that of his anticipation.

The house stood back from the road on the side of the hill. It was a handsome brick mansion, surrounded by a dozen immense pines. Stuart loved the place. It was dear to his memories. He had no recollection of any other home, although he had been born in one of the Eastern States. It was in this house that his mother had died when he was ten years old. He owed his thoughtful, romantic, truthful nature to her. From his father, on the other hand, he had inherited his slow, stubborn, occasional fierce bursting out of passionate feelings. He thought of all the happy times in the old house where as boy, and later as college man, he had enjoyed all the luxuries of wealth and leisure and companionship.

Suddenly a man drove out of the roadway into which he and the doctor were just turning to go up to the house. Both men pulled up just in time to avoid running into each other.

"Is that you, Dr. Saxon?" shouted the man. "I was just going for you. Mr. Duncan has been hurt. The horses ran away this morning and"—

Stuart did not wait to hear more. He jumped out of the buggy and at the top of his speed cut through the grounds in front of the house. The doctor uttered an exclamation, gave his horse one short stroke with the whip, and dashed up the driveway like a whirlwind. At the end of the long veranda he stopped long enough to jump out and let the horse go on to the barn. He was so quick that, as he reached the large front door, he met Stuart just leaping up the veranda steps.

"Now then, my boy," said the doctor quietly, filling up the doorway with his large frame, and getting

directly in front of Stuart, "don't get excited. This is my case, not yours."

"Let me by!" cried Stuart, his face almost black with passion. "He is my father! Perhaps he is dying! What right have you to keep in the way?"

"Very well!" The doctor spoke softly, almost like a child. He stepped aside and began to walk slowly down the veranda steps. "You have inherited the Duncan passion to perfection; but if your father dies through your nonsensical exercise of it just now, don't blame me."

Stuart made one stride and caught the doctor's arm. "Come back!" he said. All his black passion was gone in an instant. "I will be a man like you. Come! You will perhaps need my help."

The doctor looked keenly at him and at once turned around and entered the house with him. The incident would not mean anything without a knowledge of what was at stake on this occasion. But Dr. Saxon had good reason to believe that the life of the son in this instance was imperiled by the fearful excitement which at rare intervals broke out in him like a torrent. To confront the father with him under those conditions might prove serious to them both.

Within the house servants were running about in confusion. The doctor stopped one of them and said roughly, "Now, then, are you all crazy here? Where is Mr. Duncan?"

"They carried him into the north room," was the answer.

"North room! Why didn't you carry him to the North Pole and be done with it! Here, Stuart! Send

one of the men down for my black case at the office, and then come to your father."

The doctor went down the long hall, turned to the right into another corridor, and entered a large room at the end.

Lying over the bed in the middle of the room was a young woman. Her arms were clasped over the face of the man who lay there, and she had fainted in that position.

The doctor lifted her up just as Stuart entered.

"O God! Louise too!" he cried.

The doctor gave him a look that calmed him and replied: "No, she is in a faint. Now, then, use all the sense you have and it won't be too much. You look after your sister while I see to your father."

He put Louise into Stuart's arms, who with the servant's help soon restored her to consciousness, while the doctor turned to the man on the bed, and in a masterly manner proceeded to do all that his skill and keenness of practice could do.

Ross Duncan lay like a dead man. He was of powerful build and looked very stern and hard even as he lay there helpless. There was a terrible gash over one of his eyes. He was covered with blood and dust, bruised from head to foot, with clothes torn and disfigured; but he had not lost consciousness, and with the iron will which had always characterized him he managed to let the doctor know his wishes.

"All right, all right, Mr. Duncan," said the doctor in reply to a whisper from the wounded man. "I won't give you any anesthetic if you don't want it. I shall have to sew up this little place over you eye,

though. Has that tortoise got around with that case yet?" he asked Stuart, who had left Louise a minute to come over to the bed.

"He hasn't had time yet, doctor."

"Why didn't he take my horse?" growled the doctor. "How is Louise?"

"Better. But what a terrible fall father must have had!"

Stuart felt for his father's hand, and Ross Duncan's fingers closed over those of his son. Stuart kneeled by the bed and kissed his father's cheek as he used to do when a boy. The older man was evidently moved by the caress. A tear rolled over his face.

"Come now," broke in the doctor, apparently gruffer than ever. "One would think you two hadn't seen each other for a year at least! We must get him ready for the operation. Stuart you promised to help me. Give me your attention now."

The doctor soon had his patient as comfortable as the nature of the injuries would allow. The case arrived, the gash was sewed up quickly, and at the end of the hour Ross Duncan was resting under the influence of a draught, while the doctor, Stuart, and Louise were in another room talking over the accident.

The sister of Stuart Duncan was very pretty, very proud, and very selfish. She was six years younger than her brother. She had been two years to a finishing school in New York, but had not finished any particular branch of study. She could play the piano a little and the harp a little, and do other things, except housework, a little. She lay on the lounge now, with Stuart near by stroking her head, and told the story of the accident.

“Father and I started to drive down to the station this morning to meet you, Stuart. When we reached the crossroad leading up to the Forge mine we were early for the train, and father drove up to the engine house on some business. When we got up there, the miners were gathering to march down to the square. It was the first news of the strike we had had. Father was very much excited and talked to the men to persuade them to go back to work. Some of them talked back in the most insulting way; said they were free men and did not have to work for a corporation, and all that. You know how they talk, Stuart; nothing makes father so angry, and I don’t blame him. I think the men are simply horrid to make all this trouble just now as I was getting ready to go East for that yachting cruise with the Vasplaines; and this strike will probably stop their going. Then father jumped out of the carriage and was going to give one of the men who insulted him a good thrashing, and serve him right, when the rest came around and made him get into the carriage again. I never saw father so angry, and I was scared almost to death, the men were so rough. We drove back to the crossroad, and at that steep turn by that old Beury shaft we came upon a crowd of miners marching into town from the lower range. They were carrying a large white banner with some horrid picture on it. The horses were frightened and turned and ran right towards the old shaft. I don’t know what happened then, only we were thrown out; and it is a miracle that I was not killed. Jem the coachman was driving, and he fell on a pile of shaft ore. He ran up to the house and got the other horses and brought father and me home. I

fainted away several times, and when I saw father laid on the bed with that awful gash on his head, I thought he was killed. If he dies, the miners will be to blame. If it hadn't been for their going out on this strike, this horrible accident would not have happened. It's all as horrid as it can be!"

At this point Louise burst into a great fit of hysterical crying.

"Dear, you must have been hurt by the fall!" cried Stuart as he soothed and comforted her.

"No! no! I was not even bruised!" replied Louise. She stopped crying and sat up on the lounge and began to arrange her hair.

Dr. Saxon walked towards the other end of the room with a peculiar look on his face. Then he wheeled around and said with his characteristic bluntness: "I must go back to the office. I've left directions for your father's treatment. He is not dangerously hurt. Send for me if I am needed. Miss Louise, you had better take those powders and keep as quiet as possible to-day."

He laid the medicine down on a table and went out. A minute later his horse was heard rushing by the veranda and down the road.

So this was the home-coming of Stuart Duncan after his year's absence abroad. He had visited with interest many of the famous capitals of Europe. He had sauntered through museums and picture galleries; he had studied, not very profoundly but with genuine interest, the people he had met and the customs he had observed that were new. The year had been very largely a holiday for him. He had used all the money he wished,

drawing on his letter of credit without any thought of economy. His father was several times a millionaire and never stinted the money. What he wanted was that his son and daughter should have the best of everything, from clothes and food to education and travel. And Stuart had gone through college and through Europe with about the same easy feeling of having a comfortable time. He was perfectly healthy, had no vices (he did not even like a cigar), unusually thoughtful on some questions, with no particular ambitions and no special enthusiasms. If he gave his future any thought while abroad, it was simply to picture a life of business in connection with his father's mining interests. That was his father's desire, and Stuart did not have any other.

He had come home from the picture galleries and cathedrals of the Old World to face, first of all, this rough incident of his father's injury. In connection with it was the strike, which was specially personal, not only because it involved the Duncan interests, but because the leader of it was Eric Vassal, Stuart's old playfellow and friend. The more he thought of Eric the more he felt the strike to be a serious matter. So much might be involved in it for him and Eric.

Nearly a week went by before Ross Duncan was able to sit up and talk much. During that time Stuart faithfully remained at home. He had not seen Eric, and Eric, as he supposed, had not been to see him. His father and Louise needed his constant care. But he anticipated meeting his old playfellow with a curious feeling of excitement whenever he thought of that scene in the public square and recalled the prayer and its effect.

At the end of the week, father and son were talking together over the situation. The miners were still out and the strike was still on, with no prospect of settlement.

"I tell you, Stuart," said Ross Duncan, while his great square chin grew hard and tense, "the companies will never concede the demands of the men! I will never go an inch to meet them while they are in their present attitude."

"Do you think the men ask too much, father?"

"Too much! With ore at the present price! It is outrageous just when we were beginning to get on our feet again. It has been a very dull winter and things were just beginning to turn our way again."

"But I thought ore had gone up. Isn't that what the men claim as the reason for their demand for an increase? They say the wages ought to go up with the rise in ore."

"They are fools!" Ross Duncan struck the pillow beside him passionately. "The companies were under contract for large quantities of ore at the old price before this rise came. The rise will not benefit us any until we have disposed of our old contracts."

"Why don't the companies tell the men so?"

"Pshaw! Stuart, you are"—Ross Duncan controlled himself violently. Stuart was alarmed for him. He rose and went over nearer the bed.

"Father, you must not get excited. Remember what Dr. Saxon said yesterday. You must not talk any more on this subject."

"I shall! There, I can control myself."

It was wonderful to see the change that came over

the man. He stiffened his muscles, then relaxed them and let his hand, which had been clinched, open easily and lie open on the bedclothes. Then he spoke without a quiver of passion, slowly and coldly.

"The companies do not tell the men so because the men wouldn't believe a word the companies say. Yet there isn't a man in our mines who can say Ross Duncan ever cheated a man out of a penny or ever told him an untruth. I tell you, Stuart, the men are the most stubborn, ungrateful, ignorant lot of animals that ever lived. Why, all last winter I kept more than a dozen families going with food and fuel because they had been sick or shiftless, and I'll warrant you those very families are in the front row of the parades every morning! The men are cutting their own throats. The companies will never give in."

Stuart did not say anything for awhile. Then: "Don't you think, father, that the men have been very quiet and law-abiding? There has been no disturbance thus far."

"Wait till we get the new men in from Chicago and then see."

"Will the companies try to do that?"

"They certainly will if the strike continues another week. We lose our contracts unless we can deliver the ore as specified."

"Isn't it a little remarkable, father," said Stuart after another pause, "that the men have opened their meetings in the square every morning with prayer?"

Ross Duncan uttered a sound that represented more scorn than a hundred words.

"Who do they pray to? The devil?"

"The prayer I heard the first morning I came home was as good a prayer as I ever heard in church."

"Who offered it?"

"Eric," replied Stuart, flushing up a little.

"He is the leader of the whole strike; the most dangerous man on the range to-day. I advise you to break with him."

Stuart leaned forward a little. "You remember, father, Eric saved my life when the skip broke in the shaft?"

"Well, it was only what any man would do. You are not under any great debt to him."

Stuart did not reply. He felt the strange passion he inherited from his father rising in him, and after a few questions as to his father's condition he went out of the room.

That afternoon he went up on the hills for the first time since his return. He sat down near one of the mines and thought over his talk with his father. Then he grew restless and walked down into the town. As he passed the office he went in and found a letter in the box addressed to him. He put it in his pocket and walked on through the square past the band stand, crossed the railroad tracks and went up the street, which narrowed, as all the streets did, into the miners' paths, until he reached the building belonging to another of his father's mines.

The pumps were still going, although some of the men had threatened to pull them out. There were only six men still at work in the engine house. Stuart walked up to a favorite seat on a great stone which cropped out on the hill. One of the few old pines still left on the slope grew close by.

He sat down and took out the letter. It was from Eric. As he read, his face darkened.

"Dear Stuart,"—the letter began with the old familiar sound,—“I write to you because I have been refused admission to the house. I called twice this week to inquire for you and the servants would not let me in. I don't blame you. The times are bringing many questions before us, and the rights of men as men are not to be ignored. I don't know as you care to keep up the old acquaintance. It rests with you to say. I don't know what a year may have done for you. The new situation may also make a change in your attitude towards me. I am doing what I believe is right. It may seem all wrong from your standpoint. If you will be at the old stone by the big tree this afternoon, I will meet you there. Your old friend, ERIC.”

This was a most unsatisfactory letter to Stuart. The refusal to let Eric into the house angered him to a white heat. He could not understand it, unless the servants were acting under his father's orders. He flushed red and then turned white at the thought. It was not like Ross Duncan to do such a thing. And yet, he might do it. And then, the rest of the letter; it was not like the old Eric he had known; and yet, the one great love of Stuart had been and still was his love for Eric. It was not because Eric had once saved his life; he would have loved him in any case; but the years had brought changes, the past year particularly.

He had been reading and brooding with head bent down, and now, as he raised it, he saw Eric coming up the hill.

The two men met with the commonplace salutations:

"How are you, Eric?" "How are you, Stuart?" They shook hands stiffly and then sat down on the rock. Each seemed a little shy of the other.

Stuart was the first to speak. He knew from experience that Eric would never say the first word.

"I have just been reading your letter. There is some mistake about your being refused admission to the house. Father would never do such a thing, Eric."

"I'm not so sure of that. But I don't feel hurt on that account, even if he would. Is he better?"

"Yes." Stuart paused. He did not seem to know what to say. It was harder to break over the gap of a year's growth in manhood than he had thought. Then he burst out with a short laugh:—

"Oh, I say, Eric, what nonsense for us to be sitting here like fools on this rock as if we were afraid of each other! In memory of the old days, will you put your hand on my shoulder and look me in the face?"

"It is not the same, Eric," said Stuart with a sigh at last, letting his hand slip from the other's shoulder.

"A better one, I hope. The times have made me sober and gray."

"How is it, Eric? Is there any difference in your feeling towards me?"

"No." Eric was pushing the gravel with his foot and looking out over the valley. Then he looked Stuart frankly in the face and repeated his "No. But you are the one to change."

"I! What change has there been in me?" Stuart put the question almost indignantly.

"You have seen the world. What can I be to you now? More and more, as the time goes on, the differ-

ence must widen. You are a gentleman of wealth and leisure, and I am a workingman."

"You don't need to be, Eric. You could get ahead; you could command any place in time with your intelligence and—and"—

Stuart hesitated for just the word, but Eric said quietly:—

"I have chosen my place. A workingman I am, and a workingman I shall be as long as there are wrongs to right and rights to maintain."

"But what has all this to do with us, Eric? We have been over all this ground before. Do you not love me?"

"Indeed, truly I do!" Eric turned his large dark eyes affectionately towards his friend.

"And do I not love you?"

"Yes," replied Eric simply. "But our lives are of necessity widening out farther apart. What can prevent that? In the very nature of the situation it could not be otherwise. Here I am advising thousands of men to a course which is directly opposed by your father, and would be by you if you were in his place. The time is coming when the clash between your interests and mine will be so fierce that"—

Stuart jumped to his feet. "Do you mean to say, Eric, that friendship true and loving cannot exist between you and me simply because of the accident of birth, or the circumstance of wealth, or difference in surroundings? Have we not already proved that it can exist?"

"Yes," replied Eric slowly. "It can exist; but it is, in one sense, an unnatural existence. You represent Capital; I represent Labor. Take the present situa-

tion of the strike. I believe as much as I believe anything that it is right and even religious that we do as we do. Deep in your heart you condemn us for the movement. If you were in your father's place, you would feel exactly as he does about it. How, then, can we expect the old relation between us to be continued?"

Stuart sat silent, looking out over the beautiful valley. The town looked very pretty in its setting of hills and pines. His father's house was the most conspicuous residence to be seen. From where the two men sat it looked palatial. Down at the other end of the town among the miners' houses Stuart could distinguish Eric's home, a little two-story cottage, not different from a hundred others. He did a good deal of hard thinking in a few minutes; then he said:—

"Eric, you began the talk about the difference between us. Do you want to break off anything? Is that your intention?"

Eric for the first time grew flushed beneath his dark bronzed face. "No," he said. "I simply wished to state the conditions under which we now live. There is no change in my feelings towards you, and cannot be."

"Neither is there in mine towards you, Eric. Why do you place the responsibility so wholly on me, as if I would be the one to change, or as if it rested with me to say that our friendship was possible or not?"

"Because it does rest with you. Are you not representative of riches, power, intelligence, all the great machinery which sets things in motion, society, that world by itself, leisure, culture, advantages? And is it not for you as representative of all these things to bear the responsibility which must always rest on the

strong and the educated and the wealthy?" Eric paused on the crest of a wave of speech that seemed about to break over all his self-control.

Stuart after awhile said doggedly: "It comes back to the question, Is our friendship to continue on the old basis? I can be no other than I am. If I have been born to wealth and leisure and education and society and travel and all that, I am powerless to change it. And you are what you are because you have been born into it and choose to continue there, though you know, Eric, you could rise out of it if you only would."

"It is useless to discuss that point," replied Eric quietly. "But tell me, Stuart, in answer to the main question, do you believe in this strike?"

"No, I can't say I do," said Stuart with his usual frankness.

"There! You see where the difficulty lies, replied Eric sadly. "The very nature of the situation compels a breach in our old relations with each other. Of course I believe in the strike or I wouldn't be the leader of it."

"It seems like a bad way to get at what you want," said Stuart.

"Have you studied into the details of the situation? Do you know all the facts which have led up to this movement?"

"I know what my father has told me. He says the men did not consult with the companies and went out without warning or notice of any kind."

Eric rose to his feet. "It's a lie!" he exclaimed with a sudden passion that no one would suspect existed. It was like an explosion that transformed the man into another being.

Stuart also rose. "Do you mean to say that my father lied to me about the facts?"

"I do!" retorted Eric. "He lied and he knows he lied!"

Stuart took one step towards Eric and the two young men confronted each other. Suddenly Eric turned on his heel and without a word walked down the hill. For a moment Stuart seemed on the point of going after him or calling out for him to stop. But the next moment he stepped back to the stone and sat down. When Eric had disappeared behind a clump of trees, Stuart rose and went towards home by another path.

When he reached the house Louise met him and told him his father wanted to see him at once. He went in and stood by the bed, his whole being stirred by the interview with Eric. It was the first real passion to speak of that had roused his self-controlled nature. His father spoke with the bluntness that always marked his speech.

"Stuart, I want you to go to Cleveland for the company. This strike has caused complications with our local agents. There is important business that I ought to see to in person. Can you go at once? The Eastern express is due at six o'clock."

"I am at your service, father," replied Stuart. He was still going over his recent interview with Eric.

"Here are the papers. I can explain the business to you in a few minutes."

Stuart drew up a chair and his father gave him instructions. Then as Stuart put the papers in his pocket, Ross Duncan said, his face and manner softening a little as he fell back on his pillows:—

"Stuart, lad, in case anything happens to me, of course you know I have left everything to you and Louise. The mines with other property and invested funds, besides New York property, and bonds not connected with the mines, are worth over four millions. I have left Louise a million in property. You will be left in the sole charge of everything in case I die. Of course you understand that I am the company. This strike is against me. If I die, it will be against you. I believe I can depend on you to defend the millions I have worked so hard all my life to get together," said Ross Duncan. Then in his old manner he said, "You will have to hurry to get that train."

Stuart rose, and a conflict of feelings rose with him. What his father had just said moved him one way, the afternoon with Eric moved him another. He wanted to ask his father one question before he went away.

"Father," he asked almost timidly, "did you tell me that the strikers went out without giving the companies any notice or warning?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean that they gave absolutely no hint of their intentions to any one?"

Ross Duncan rose up a little and his face changed.

"They sent their representative, as they called him, to me, about two weeks before the morning of the strike, to confer about wages, but I wouldn't recognize any such representative with any right to interfere with my business and tell me what wages I ought to pay."

"Who was the representative?" Stuart asked the question, well knowing the answer.

"Who was it? Who but that praying, pious friend

of yours, Eric Vassall!" Ross Duncan sat up, and the wound on his forehead grew purple. Stuart was frightened at the sight. He could not say anything. His father sank down again, exhausted with his anger. Stuart went away without even a word of farewell. There was a bitterness in his heart that was new to it. Eric had been right then, according to his view. The company had received notice. There had been an attempt at consultation. As the train whirled him on, he cursed in his heart the whole social perplexity.

He reached the city, attended to the business, and started back the next day to Champion. It was just dusk when he stepped out on the station platform. He thought a crowd of curious-looking people was there. Something had happened. Dr. Saxon came up, seized his bag and grasped his hand in a strong but nervous manner. Solemn, strangely set faces looked out of the dusk at him.

"What's the matter, doctor?" asked Stuart, trembling at something, he could not think what.

"Your father, my boy"—

"Is he worse?"

"Come this way; my buggy is right here. I will drive you out to the house. Get right in.

Stuart got into the buggy mechanically. The doctor threw himself in and the horse made a plunge into the dark.

"Tell me the truth, doctor." Stuart's voice was steady but faint.

The answer came after a moment. "Your father died, Stuart, an hour ago. He had a stroke of apoplexy. There was some heart trouble. He did not suffer."

For a moment everything in the universe reeled about Stuart Duncan. Then he found he was asking questions and Dr. Saxon was answering them. When they reached the house, Stuart met Louise first. She came to the front door and threw herself into his arms, crying hysterically. Stuart had not shed a tear yet. They led him into the room where Ross Duncan lay. The son stood and looked down at the cold face with that newly made scar on the forehead. There was no thought in his mind that he was now the owner of several millions of wealth. He was thinking of the last interview he had with that father and his parting without a word of affectionate farewell. And still the tears would not come to his relief.

At last he went out, and the sight of his sister's grief and fear brought the tears to his own eyes. He wept with her. They talked together. The doctor remained an hour and then took his leave. The night wore on. Louise, exhausted with the shock, had gone to her room. Stuart was finally left alone. He sent the servants all away. He could not sleep. He paced the long hallway until daylight. Just as the sun rose, he went in where his father lay and looked at him again. Ross Duncan's millions were of no use to him now. Of what use were they to the son? What load of responsibility had come to him now! These mines, these labor troubles, this strike, these wages—what difference if he let them all go? He had a right to do as he chose with his own. He would dispose of it all and live abroad. He would—what! he was planning all this and his father dead less than twenty-four hours! And then, what responsibility did rest upon him? What difference did it make to

him what wages the men received? Was he his brother's keeper? Were they his brothers? The whole thing was complex, irritating. His father's death had thrown a burden on him that he did not want to carry.

He was disturbed by a noise in the street before the house. He went to the window and drew aside the curtain. The measured tramp of heavy feet was heard coming down the road. A column of men four abreast came into sight, with one man a little in advance of the others carrying a banner. It contained a very rude drawing of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man was saying, "What do you want?" The poor man was saying, "*Crumbs* from the rich man's table." It was all very crude and one-sided in every way. The column of men swung by, nearly five hundred miners on their way from the upper range to join the strikers in Champion in their regular morning gathering at the park. Every man as he went by turned his head and looked up at the house where the dead mine owner lay. It is possible that they saw the son standing there. He watched the column tramp through the dust and disappear down the road. And as he turned back towards all that remained of the mortal flesh of the man who had been worth so many millions, he was conscious that he was face to face with the great problem of his own existence with which was involved the problem of thousands of other men. How will he answer that problem?

CHAPTER II.

LARGE RESPONSIBILITIES.

A WEEK after the death and burial of Ross Duncan, Stuart and Louise were talking together of their future plans. Louise lay on a lounge, looking very pretty, dressed in mourning of a fashionable pattern. She appeared vexed at something Stuart had just said, and tapped her foot smartly against the end of the lounge.

"I have no patience with you, Stuart. Why don't you talk sense?"

"I thought I was talking sense," replied Stuart, who was standing up by one of the windows of the room looking out on the front lawn. He turned and walked back to the end of the room and continued to pace up and down. He was very thoughtful, and part of the time seemed not to hear all that Louise said.

"Well, you lose all your sense the minute the subject of these horrid miners comes up," continued Louise. "If I was the governor of this State, I would order out the militia at once."

"Why?" asked Stuart with a slight smile. "The men are not doing anything. What would you order out the troops for?"

"I would get new men in to take the men's places and then order the militia. And you know, Stuart, it will have to come to that at last."

Stuart answered nothing. He was thinking hard of that very thing.

Louise went on talking while he stood still by the window for a minute looking out at the hills. "I regard father's death as caused directly by the miners. They frightened the horses and caused the accident that killed him. I don't see how you can side with the men in this strike."

"I don't," said Stuart without turning around.

"Then why don't you do something to start up the mines? Haven't we a right to manage our own business and hire other men? If the miners threaten to interfere, we have a right to call for State troops."

"I hope it will not come to that," replied Stuart gravely, as he walked up to the lounge and sat down by his sister. "Louise, I want to talk planly with you about this matter. I do not feel just as father did about it."

"You just said you didn't side with the men."

Louise sat up and arranged her dress. Some ribbons at her throat kept her fingers busy for a minute.

"I don't side with them in the sense that I believe they are doing the right thing to strike this way. But I believe they ought to have more wages, and that the companies ought to pay them the scale they have drawn up." Stuart was talking out aloud to his sister, for the first time really expressing his convictions as they had grown on him every day since his father's death had thrown the burden of ownership upon him.

Louise heard his statement with a frown. For a while she was silent, then she rose and walked out of the room, angrily saying as she went, "Ross Duncan's son is not much like his father. That's true, if you did say it."

Stuart rose and went over by the window again. He was vexed, not with Louise, but with the whole situation. Since his father's death he had gone through a great many struggles, and each one had left him with the feeling of his responsibility heavier upon him. The strike was in the same condition as when it began. The different mine owners at Cleveland had conferred together and were united in their determination not to yield to the demand for higher wages. Stuart had been asked to come down to a conference to be held in the city that week. He expected to leave the next day. As he stood looking out at the stock-covered hills he knew that a crisis was rapidly approaching, and that within the next few days events would be precipitated that would leave their mark upon his whole life. He was not a coward, and that was the reason he could not run away from the situation. The interests of the mines at Champion were all in his hands, but the other mines on the upper and lower ranges were involved with his in the general strike. He was not at full liberty to act alone. Besides, the men had within a week formed a Union and would not treat with the separate mine owners, insisting that the companies must recognize the Union as a whole.

Meanwhile matters were coming to a crisis very fast. Stuart clinched his hands tightly and bit his lips nervously as he turned again from the window and paced the room. He was worth more than two million dollars in his own right, and yet the possession of the money caused him little real pleasure. With all the rest he was having an inward revolution of education toward the entire problem. And he could not avoid the feeling that

before the week was gone he might come face to face with the greatest fact of his life.

As he stood there thinking it all over, the bell rang, and one of the servants came and said that Eric was at the door. Stuart went himself out into the hall.

"Come in, Eric," he said quietly.

Eric came in and the two young men shook hands silently. Since Ross Duncan's death these two had met several times, and it seemed as if the old familiar relation between them might be possible again. There was, however, still a serious barrier caused by the conditions that surrounded the two men.

"I came up this morning," began Eric with his usual directness, "to tell you that the men want you to speak to them at the park to-day at noon."

Stuart was surprised. "I thought the men would not admit any one to the speaking stand except those of their own number."

"They haven't so far. You are the only one; or you will be, if you come to the meeting to-day."

"What do the men want?" Stuart asked the question not feeling just sure that he cared to go.

Eric did not reply immediately. He seemed to be waiting for Stuart to say something more.

Stuart sat looking at Eric with that quiet gaze peculiar to him. "Do the men want me to make a speech on the situation?"

"I do not know just what they expect. They simply voted to ask you to come this noon. It may be an opportunity for a settlement."

Eric spoke slowly. Stuart suddenly rose and went over and put a hand on his old acquaintance's shoulder.

"Eric," he said, while a sad smile crossed his face and died out in its usual thoughtful quiet; "doesn't it seem strange to you that we should be making so much out of such an affair as a difference of a few cents more for a day's work? Is life worth having if it must be spent in serious quarrels over such little matters?"

"Do you call this a little matter?" Eric spoke almost bitterly. And then he added bluntly: "A few cents a day may be a little to a man who has plenty of money, but it may mean the difference between comfort and suffering to the man who has almost nothing."

Stuart colored, but answered quietly: "No, Eric, you do not just understand me. I am ready to pay this difference in the men's wages. I think their demand is just."

"Come to the park this noon and tell them so."

"Well, I will. I am going to Cleveland to-morrow, Eric."

"If all the owners were like you, the strike would not hold out long," said Eric as he rose to go. He had a great deal to do to prepare for the noon meeting, and in spite of Stuart's urging him to remain longer he went away. There was still a gap between the two. They did not feel easy in each other's presence. Eric had not spoken of the first meeting they had, and Stuart, while feeling differently about it, had not approached the subject.

He told Louise of his invitation to speak to the men at the park and went out after a little while, intending to go up on one of the hills and think by himself. But as he drove out into the road he changed his mind and went down into the town and up into Dr. Saxton's office. He thought he would ask his advice in the matter.

The doctor was alone, which was a rare circumstance with him. He greeted Stuart with the familiarity which came from a lifelong acquaintance.

"Well, you aristocrat! are you going to trample on the feelings of the poor downtrodden masses much longer? Are you going to withhold from them their rightful dues?"

"Doctor, I am going to speak to the men at the park this noon."

"Are you? Well, give 'em a dose that'll put 'em on the sick list for a month. They're the most ungrateful, obstinate, pig-headed, senseless crowd of human animals I ever saw. I've made up my mind, Stuart, not to do another thing for 'em. I'm not on the pay of the companies any more, am I, since this strike set in?"

"No, I suppose not. That is, the contract the mines made with you is good only while the mines are in operation."

"Just so. Well, here these wild Cornish men expect me to doctor 'em just the same whether I am getting anything for it or not. I have made up my mind that I won't do it any longer."

Just then there was a sound of steps outside, and a shuffled noise, followed by a thump on the door that might have been made by the thick end of a club.

"Come in!" shouted the doctor. "Here's one of 'em now," he said to Stuart in a low tone. "Watch me deal with him."

The door opened and in shambled a man of enormous build. He had a great mass of tangled yellow hair on his head, and his beard was of the same color. He was fully six feet four inches in height and had aston-

ishly long arms and large feet. Stuart sat back in the window seat looking on, and although he was running over in his mind what he would say to the men, he could not help smiling at the scene that followed.

"I come to fill the bottle, doctor," was the quiet remark of the big miner.

The doctor made no motion to take the bottle which the man pulled out of his vest pocket and stood holding awkwardly between his two hands.

"You can move out of here with your bottle, Sanders. I'm not filling any bottles any more."

"Since when?" asked Sanders slowly.

"Since this strike, this nonsensical, foolish business of yours and the rest of you. Do you think I'm going to go to all the expense of keeping up my drugs and medicines, and sew you fellows up and fill you up with costly preparations, while I'm not getting anything from the companies? So get out with your bottle!"

Sanders without a word backed towards the door. The doctor wheeled around toward his desk and began to hum a tune. Just as the miner laid his hand on the doorknob the doctor turned his head and shouted, "What was in the bottle, anyway?"

"Cod-liver oil," replied Sanders, scratching his head and slowly turning the doorknob.

"When did you get it filled?"

"Last week, sir."

"Last week! It was three days ago, or I'm a striker. What on earth did you do with half a pint of cod-liver oil in that time?"

Sanders shook his head and smiled faintly, but did not venture to say anything.

"Have you been greasing your boots with it? I'd be willing to swear that you have, only half a pint wouldn't oil more than one of 'em. Well, bring it here! I'll fill it this once and that's all. What did I give it to you for? Do you remember?"

Sanders kept discreet silence, and the doctor said to Stuart: "It isn't cod-liver oil exactly, it's a new preparation that I have just had sent up from Chicago, and it has been of some use in lung troubles. I think perhaps I'll let him have another bottle. He has a bad cough." As if to second the doctor's statement, Sanders gave utterance to a hoarse rumble that was on the same large scale as himself and shook the bottles on the doctor's dispensary shelves. The doctor measured out a quantity of the medicine, picked out a new cork, and as he handed the bottle over, said cheerfully: "Now, Sanders, of course you will forget everything I tell you, but I want you to remember that if you don't follow the directions on the bottle you are liable to fall down dead any minute. Well, is there anything more?"

The miner was shuffling his hand down in his pocket among a lot of loose change.

"How much is it?" he finally asked.

"Oh, well, that's all right," said the doctor, turning red. "Keep it to remember me by. I'll make you a birthday present of it. But mind you, no more medicine from this office till the strike is over. I can't afford to doctor a thousand men for nothing."

Sanders went out and the doctor turned to Stuart and said: "I thought I might as well let him have it. Pshaw! I'm too easy. But Sanders has got consumption. Awful queer how these big fellows catch it."

Just then there was a tap on the door, and before the doctor could call out the door opened and a little old woman came in. She had a very sad face, and looked like one of those persons who know life mainly through its troubles.

"Doctor," she said, after bowing to Stuart, "me old man is sufferin' terrible this mornin'. I want ye to send him somethin' to ease the pain a bit."

"Where is his pain?"

"Eh?"

"I say where is his pain? In his head or feet?"

"In his back, doctor; an' he is howlin' like murder for somethin' to ease him. I come right down here. The doctor, he said, would give me anything I needed."

"Yes, that's it. The beggars don't care if I go into bankruptcy and ruin through giving them anything they need."

The doctor rose and went over to his dispensary shelves. After a very careful search he selected a bottle and poured from it into a small one, wrote directions, pasted them on, and gave the medicine to the woman.

"Here, now, Mrs. Binney, I know just what your husband's trouble is. He strained the muscles of his back that time he got caught between the timbers in the De Mott mine."

"Yes." The woman's face lighted up with some pride. "Jim held up the timbers until the other men crawled out."

"That's so. Well, I don't mind helping him. Use this as I have directed and it will give him some relief."

The woman thanked the doctor, and as she turned

to go she wiped her eyes with her sleeve. The doctor followed her out into the hall, and Stuart could not help hearing him say to her, "I'll be out to see Jim this afternoon, tell him, Mrs. Binney."

He came back, and sitting down at his desk thumped it hard with his fist.

"That's the last case I'll take till the strike ends! The only way to bring these people to terms is to treat them sternly. I tell you, Stuart, I can't afford to go on giving medicine and service this way. It will ruin me, and besides, it isn't professional"—

There was a timid knock at the door, and the doctor caught up a medical magazine, opened it bottom side up, and turned his back to the door. There was another rap, and then as the doctor made no sound the door opened, and a boy about twelve years old came in timidly and stood with his cap in his hand, looking first at Stuart and then at the doctor's back.

"Father's been hurt. He is pump man at Davis mine. He wants you to come right up."

"Up where?" asked the doctor without turning around.

"Up where we live."

"Where's that?"

"The same place."

"What's his name?"

"Why, you know his name, doctor. You have seen him before."

The doctor wheeled around and roared: "Well! Do I know the names of a thousand different men like that? Who is your father?"

"Pump man in the Davis mine."

"Well, there are six different pump men up there. Which one is he?"

The boy began to get scared and backed towards the door.

"What's the matter with your father?" asked the doctor more gently, rising and reaching out for his black case and putting on his hat.

The boy began to sob. "I don't know; he's hurt."

"Well, you run down and get into my buggy and sit there till I come. Hurry now." The boy backed out of the door and tumbled down the stairs. The doctor gathered up his things and shouting to Stuart, "This case seems to call for my help," he dashed out of the room.

There was a drug store directly under the doctor's office, where a case of candy was kept. Stuart, leaning out of the window, saw the doctor come out of the store with a bag of something which he gave to the boy, then getting into the buggy he started off at his usual express rate and disappeared in a great whirlwind of red iron-ore dust.

Stuart smiled and said to himself: "Dear old Doc! I was going to say that his bark was worse than his bite; only it's all bark." His face grew stern again as he saw from the window a sight that was growing familiar to the people of Champion.

It was now about eleven o'clock, and into the open space around the band stand in the center of the town square the miners were beginning to come in groups of twos and fours, and by little companies. They came in from their homes out on the hills, each miner carrying a stick, the uses of which became more apparent as the men formed afterwards in marching order.

The different miners' bands had already gathered near the stand. They united in the playing of several stirring pieces while the crowd was gathering. Very fast the square filled up. At last, as the clock on the tower pointed its hands at a quarter after eleven, four thousand men were packed into the open space surrounded by the town buildings. Stuart remained looking out from the doctor's office window. The whole scene was before him. He could hear as well. Since that first day when he had come home from his European trip he had seen the miners together in this way several times, but to-day he was impressed more than ever with the appearance of the men, with their rude misspelled banners, with their music made entirely by men out of the mines who had trained themselves with great patience to play march tunes; more than all, he was struck with the faces of the men, the stolid, dull, but determined look that most of them wore; he was impressed with their general appearance as human beings making ■ fight for a few more cents a day. And with all the rest he could not help feeling that the men regarded him as an aristocrat, removed from them by his whole life, so different from theirs, and unable from their point of view to sympathize with or understand them.

"And yet," Stuart said to himself with a sigh, "I would almost exchange places with nearly any one of them. I mean, that I am not where I can use what I was born into as I would like to use it."

The bands stopped playing and a miner went up into the stand. This time it was not Eric. The men all uncovered their heads. It was very quiet. The people of Champion stood looking on from the sidewalks,

the church steps, the railroad depot platform, and the store and office windows. The man in the stand lifted up his face and offered a short prayer.

"O God, grant us a blessing to-day as we go to our place of meeting. Be with us there in our council together. Grant that we may be led to do the right. Keep us all from trespass, or sin, or drunkenness. And when we have ended our strife here below, may we all, master and men, meet in heaven. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Stuart heard every word of the prayer from where he sat. There was something indescribably sad to him in the whole scene. The miners put on their hats and the bands at once struck up a lively tune. The men began to move out into the main street, forming a double line or column four abreast. The bands marched each one in front of a section or division of the line of march. The men at a signal shouldered their sticks, and accustomed by this time to the marching, they presented a military appearance as they swung past the church and into the road leading over to the park where they now held a daily meeting at noon.

Stuart watched for Eric and, as he came by, called to him from the window:—

"I'll drive over. My horse and buggy are here."

Eric waved his hand and went by without replying. Stuart came down and after the columns of men had passed, he drove along at a little distance behind them.

All the way over he was debating with himself what he would say. It was the first time he had really met the men. A great many of them did not know what the feeling of the new mine owner was. They supposed

that Ross Duncan's son was like the father. Others among them had known him as a child and boy and liked him. He was a favorite in the town. Many a rough, reckless, stolid Dane and Cornish man had admired the lad who had been so fearless in going up and down the shafts. There was a good deal of favorable comment among the men in line over his coming out to-day.

So when he finally came into the park and was met by a committee there and escorted up into the pavilion where the speakers went, he faced a great crowd that was in the humor to give him fair play at least. A thousand more men had come in from the other ranges, and an audience of over five thousand was packed deep all about the pavilion.

Stuart could not remember afterwards all that was said that day by himself or the men. Eric had spoken briefly, and then in behalf of the Union so recently formed he said that he had the pleasure of introducing the owner of the Champion mines, who would address the meeting.

Stuart had never spoken in public except on a few occasions in college rhetoricals. He was no orator and he knew it. And yet as he rose to speak to this outdoor gathering in a position that might have tried many experienced speakers, he felt a sense of relief and a certain pleasure.

He began at once with a statement of his willingness to grant the men their scale of wages.

"If I understand the situation," he said, "the demand made by the contract miners is for two dollars a day on account of the danger of the work and because

the companies have been paying only one dollar and ninety cents for more than a year now. I believe the companies ought to pay that price. I might as well say that I do not believe you have taken the right course to get what you want. I cannot sympathize with this strike. I do sympathize with your demand for two dollars a day."

"How about the rest of the companies?" asked a voice.

"Ay, that's it. How about the lower range? What's the mind on that point?" said another.

"I cannot answer for them. I am here to-day to speak for myself. If the men who are employed in the Champion mines will come back at any time now I will give them what they ask for."

This statement was greeted with cheers, but at once there followed a storm of cries from all over the park.

"All or none!"

"Union rules first."

"The owners must treat with the Union."

"We'll never go back on terms that shut out part."

"Stand together, men! That's what the owners does."

"Yes, they fixes wages; we fix they, if"—

Eric stood up and waved his hat. There was a gradual settling down of the confusion, and as he stood there, evidently waiting to be heard, the men soon became quiet again. Stuart admired his control of the crowd. Eric had great influence with it.

"Brothers," he said slowly, "I believe we have reached a critical point in this movement. Here is one of the owners who has expressed his willingness to grant

our demands. The question now is, shall the Champion men go back to their mines while the rest continue to deal with the other owners? This is a question for the Union to settle."

"Eric," spoke Stuart in a low tone as he stood close by him, "let me say a word or two more, will you? I believe the decision of the men to-day will be a serious one, and I want to do all I can to make it right."

Eric at once raised his voice. "Men, Mr. Duncan wants to say a word again. I am sure you will give him a careful hearing."

"Ay, that we will."

"He's no bad for a millionaire."

"Give him a chance. He doesn't often have it!" shouted a voice with a touch of irony in it.

Stuart took advantage of the lull that followed these and other shouts to speak as he had never thought of doing when he came to the park. He believed that the result of the men's action would be exceedingly important for themselves and himself. He had never had such a great desire to explain his own attitude towards the whole problem of labor and capital, as it affected him.

It is not possible to describe his speech. Eric thought at the time that it was the best speech he had ever heard from a moneyed man. At times it was impassioned, then quiet and conversational. It is doubtful if very many of the miners understood it as Stuart meant. He was, in reality, voicing a policy for the men of money which he afterwards followed out with some changes.

This much he made clear to the men. He sympathized with their demands for larger wages, while he

could not agree with their methods. And he would do all in his power to give them their just demands, as far as he was at liberty to act independently. He told them he was going to Cleveland the next day to confer with the other mine owners, and would use all his influence to get the others to agree to the rise in wages. He repeated his offer to treat with the thousand or more men employed in the Champion mines at any time they chose to return. As he closed, he made an appeal to the men to use reason, and spoke of the religious influence that so far had prevailed for the good of the community.

There ran through the whole of Stuart's speech this second time a passionate desire to be understood as a man before men. He had never before had such a longing to be understood. Neither had he ever felt the gap between himself and the men to be so wide and deep. As has been said it is doubtful if parts of his speech were understood at all by the men.

As soon as he finished there was a great uproar of applause and shouts. Eric himself could not restore quiet. The committee politely asked Stuart to leave the park while the Union went into a conference over his proposals. Stuart was glad to get away. He felt exhausted with his unusual effort.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Eric came to the house with the news of the decision reached by the miners' Union. Stuart at once saw by his face that the situation was serious.

"The men voted by a large majority not to go back to work till all could go back on the same terms. That is, they demanded that all the mine owners recognize the Union and make terms with it for all the men."

"Do you mean that the men who work in the Champion mines refuse to accept my offer of the wages they demand?"

"Yes; that is, the Champion miners will not go back until the other owners make the same terms you make and make them to the Union."

"Which means simply that this strike is a deadlock," replied Stuart decidedly; "for I know the men at Cleveland and they will never agree to any such terms."

"The miners will not agree to any other." Eric spoke quietly but sadly.

"Eric," said Stuart suddenly, after a pause; "tell me frankly, as brother to brother: Is this a reasonable step for the men to take? Do you believe the Union will make anything by such action? Is it just or fair?"

Eric's face worked under a passionate feeling. Then he said: "The men have a right to combine for mutual support. In this instance they feel driven to it by their condition. Why should not labor seek to defend itself as capital does? You, that is, I mean the mine owners generally, get together in a combine and fix wages. Why should not the miners get together and have a say about it? We have been working for years at the price set by men at a distance, who never saw a mine or a miner, far less went down into the ground to see what the labor is. These men sit in nice, upholstered offices in elegant buildings and make it their business to get just as much out of the iron ore as they can. The wages of the men are cut every time ore falls in price. Instead of taking it out of their own large dividends in the years when they have made enormous profits, every time there is a depression in the market they cut this end instead of

theirs. You know this is the case, Stuart. Three years ago a dozen men in the iron industry grew to be millionaires from the profits of this metal which God put in the ground for the common use of man. During that year the miners received only fair wages. Since then financial depression and a drop in the price of ore have followed. What do those men do who have in prosperous years made their fortunes? Do they say, 'We will draw on this reserve, and in order that the miners may not suffer we will declare smaller dividends and lose something'? No; they say at once, 'Cut down wages because ore is cheaper and we cannot afford to lose.' And who suffers? Not the mine owner. He eats just as good food, goes to Europe in his steam palace, drives his elegant carriage, keeps up his amusements. But the poor man, to whom every cent means something, goes without the common necessities of life, and his wife and children suffer because the millionaire who made his fortune on his business is not willing to share a part of it during hard times with the men who made possible his wealth with their labor. I tell you, Stuart, my heart is on fire with these conditions, and no man knows how the workingmen in this country feel unless he has been one himself. As to the Union, it is an organization that has sprung up out of wrongs that are simply devilish in their human selfishness."

Stuart sat with his head bowed during this speech. Then he said gently, "What if the Union develops the same kind of selfishness in the workingmen? What then?"

"Then the workingmen will suffer; that is inevitable."

"What if the mine owners decide to put new men into the mines?"

"Then there will be trouble."

"Do you mean that you will incite the men to violence?"

"Good God! Stuart, you know I will not. I shall use my utmost power to prevent anything of the kind."

"But what if it cannot be prevented?"

Eric said nothing. His face changed with a torrent of feeling and passion.

"If it comes to that, let God be judge if the owners and not the men are really the ones most to blame. I shall use all my influence to prevent violence or lawlessness. The Union has a right to combine for such wages as it thinks are just. It has no right to prevent other men from working at any wages they choose to take. Since I joined the Salvation Army I have become convinced that the only permanent basis for any true settlement of labor and capital differences must be a religious basis; that is, Christian."

Stuart listened with an interest he felt to be genuine. "How did you happen to join the Salvation Army, Eric?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you some time, not now."

"I've heard part of it, but I want you to tell me all of it."

"I can't now. I must go. I have hardly had a minute's time to myself since this movement came on, I must be going now. You leave for Cleveland"—

"To-night. I want to be there to-morrow. I can tell beforehand what the companies will say. Is there no other way out of it?"

"I don't see any," replied Eric.

The two men shook hands silently, and Eric went out.

Stuart went down on the night express, and next day at Cleveland was in conference with the other owners. The result of the conference was what he had anticipated. The terms of the Union were rejected. It was decided by the other owners that a force of men should be at once placed at work with steam shovels on the stock piles so as to move the ore, and in case there was trouble the troops would be called out. Stuart refused to take action on his own mines. He would not yet precipitate matters by getting new men either for the stock piles or the mines. He came back home the next day with the feeling that he was at present in a condition of indecision and waiting. He could not sympathize with the strike; he did not believe the Union was wise in refusing to let the Champion miners go to work, and he could not help feeling that a great calamity of some kind was impending.

It was two days after his return that the event occurred which really shaped and moulded his whole after-life. The mines were still manned by pump men. They had not been called out by the Union, for the reason that if once the water in the mines rose above the different levels and flowed in among the timbers the mines would become ruined, and the loss would be as heavy for the miners as the owners, in case the strike ended and work was again resumed. From six to eight men remained at each mine. There was an engineer, an assistant, two firemen, and three or four pump men, according to the size and number of pumps. These were kept

going day and night, as the water rose very rapidly if left to flow.

Stuart had gone up to the Davis mine, one of the newer ventures of his father, and recently developed. Its greatest depth was nine hundred feet. It had a manhole with ladders and a shaft at some distance from it for the "skip" or iron carriage used for hauling ore to the surface. There were six men at this mine in charge at this time.

Stuart had come to the engine house and was talking with the engineer when Eric came in.

Stuart called him over to the dry room where the miners changed their clothing for miner's dress.

"Eric, I want to go down into the mine. Won't you go with me? I want to see again for myself what the work is, and, besides, there is a new pump at the bottom that I want to look at."

Eric consented, and the two soon had on the miner's dress and were going down the ladders. It was getting late in the afternoon, and they left orders with the engineer that when they gave the signal from the bottom, he might let down the skip and they would come up in that.

For an hour they explored different levels. Stuart was restless and seemed intent on realizing as fully as possible just how the miners worked. He climbed up into difficult places and even fired off a blast in one chamber, using one of the powder sticks left by the men when they came out.

At last he and Eric stood at the bottom of the mine. This was an excavation about fourteen feet across, and the water ran in very much as if it had been a cistern.

By leaning back against the ladders the light from nine hundred feet above could be seen. Eric was sitting thus with his back to the ladder rounds and his feet in the water, which ran over the floor of the mine about four inches deep, and Stuart was examining the pump at the other side of the shaft when a terrible thing happened. A noise like the roar of a torrent grew about these two men, and before Eric could get out from his position against the ladders, a mass of iron ore came rushing down the manhole, breaking out rounds of the ladders as it fell, and, bounding from side to side, struck Eric on the shoulders with terrific force and threw him face downwards in the water.

Stuart was at his side in a moment. He raised him, and by the light of the candle in his hat saw the nature of the accident. He could not think whether the mass had fallen or been thrown purposely into the shaft. He dragged Eric away from the foot of the ladder. He was seriously injured. With the one thought of getting him to the top as soon as possible Stuart seized the lever at the bottom of the ore shaft and pulled it back as a signal to the engineer to let down the skip. There was no answering signal and Stuart pulled the wire rope again. Still no answer. He looked up through the main shaft. What was that? The pump had suddenly stopped below. But what was that great light at the top? It must be nearly sundown now. Something was on fire! The truth flashed upon him that the engine house over the main shaft was on fire! The ladders afforded escape for a man, possibly, but not encumbered with a body, and a dead body perhaps at that. Stuart dashed water in Eric's face, and he groaned. He was

not dead but unconscious. And then the whole situation forced itself into Stuart's mind. He was a prisoner with a helpless wounded man, at the bottom of a mine nine hundred feet deep, the engine house was on fire or some accident had happened to prevent the lowering of the skip, the pumps had stopped and the water in the mine was rising rapidly. It was halfway to his knees now.

He pulled the lever again and again, and in his excitement shouted like a madman. There was no answer from above. The manhole ladders were still clear. Even as they were, with the broken places, he was strong and vigorous and could climb out. But not with the burden of Eric. At that moment a charred fragment of wood floated down the ore shaft and dropped hissing in the water. He realized that he stood in the presence of death. He offered a prayer for help. He supported Eric as best he could. The water was now above his knees and rapidly rising.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESCUE.

AS the facts of his position forced themselves more clearly upon him, the first excitement over, Stuart grew calmer. The candle in his hat was nearly burned out, but he had another one, that, after the fashion of the miners, he had thrust into his boot when he changed his dress in the dry room. He pulled this out and lighted it, putting it in the candle holder in place of the piece so nearly gone.

Then he looked at the ladders carefully. The mass of broken ore which had fallen down the manhole had broken out a dozen rounds at the very foot of the ladder. By stretching up to his full height Stuart could just reach an unbroken round.

But what could he do with the dead weight of Eric? He could never lift him up that distance. For once and only one swift second Stuart considered the thought of leaving Eric. It was simply the love of life asserting itself. Why should both men die? His death would not save Eric. It was only a second, and then he felt the shock of a statement he made to himself, that life was not worth having if certain memories had always to be carried with one. He could never abandon the man who had once risked his life to save him, when the danger was fully as great as now. "But O God!" Stuart cried out, "to die drowned like a rat in a

hole!" The love of life was strong in him. He felt the water rising more and more rapidly. It was nearly to his waist now. He was supporting Eric as comfortably as he could. He felt the blood from the wound in his shoulder warming his own side as he held up the unconscious body. Once in a while Eric stirred. Once he opened his eyes and Stuart thought he was recovering. If only he could regain enough strength to help himself even a little! Stuart's mind went into a whirl as he thought of all possible ways to pull himself and Eric up even a short distance. But the bottom of the mine was of such a shape that there were no projections or slopes which afforded even a foothold.

The fire at the top was evidently blazing fiercely. Fragments of charred wood dropped down the ore shaft. Leaning over and looking up, Stuart could see a great flaming mass of twisted beams and iron rods curling over the mouth of the shaft. He moved over under the manhole dragging Eric with him and looked up that. The flames and smoke were sweeping over it like mist over a ridge. He thought that even at that distance he could see that the ladders at the top had caught and were blazing fantastically.

He gave up all hope. Still, with the instinct of life strong in him, he dragged Eric over to the pump which stood just out of the water now; and by the exercise of all his strength he managed to place the body upon it in such a way that it was two or three feet above himself as he stood on the bottom of the floor of the mine. The water had risen now to his armpits and was whirling around him in a great red pool. He shuddered, it looked so like blood in the light of the candle. The

movement he had made with Eric, together with the contact with the cold water, had roused him. He stirred and even spoke feebly.

"Where are we?" he muttered.

"You have been hurt, Eric."

Eric groaned and closed his eyes. Then he opened them again, and the sight of Stuart's pale face seemed to tell him a part of the truth. The water was running over the hand of his right arm, which hung down helpless from his wounded shoulder. He roused himself, evidently with the greatest difficulty.

"You will drown. Leave me. I am dying anyway."

"No, no, Eric! I will not leave you here alone!" Stuart spoke calmly, almost cheerfully. Eric's face was drooping over close to Stuart's shoulder. Stuart kissed his cheek, and at that very moment he heard a man's voice, the sweetest sound he ever heard, echoing down the ladder shaft.

He shouted back in reply and waited. Again the cry came in response. Some one was coming down the ladders to the rescue. Whoever he was, he was evidently coming as fast as the nature of the passage would allow; for the next time the cry was uttered Stuart could hear words of encouragement and then a voice speaking from the point where the last round of the ladder remained, saying very distinctly and in even precise English, "Who is there?"

"It is I, Stuart Duncan. I am here with Eric, and he is hurt and helpless. I can't lift him up alone."

"I always believed in being on time," replied the voice. "If you can move up under the foot of the shaft, I will throw you this rope."

Stuart lifted Eric from his position and plunged over towards the ladder hole. The water was above his shoulders. A rope was thrown and he secured it under Eric, who had again fainted from the pain and shock. Then with an exercise of strength and skill such as men possess in times of facing death, the two men, one above and one below, succeeded in drawing Eric up, and the man above secured him somehow, while Stuart, using the sides of the ladder for support, pulled himself out of that watery grave.

He was not a minute too soon, for the water was flowing in more rapidly now, and the large cavity at the bottom being almost filled, the torrent began to rise in the shafts very fast. He had no time to ask any questions of his rescuer. All three were in great peril. The ladders were blazing above them, and the water rising below them. With superhuman exertions they lifted Eric up. When they came to places where the ladders were badly broken they were obliged to use their utmost skill to move the body in safety. Once they were so long about starting up again that the water caught up with them, and Stuart, who was the last one, felt the torrent swirling around his feet.

At last, after a struggle that left them completely exhausted, they reached the first drift from the bottom. There was a wooden platform here and the drift ran out into the sides of the hill several hundred feet. Stuart and his unknown rescuer leaned a moment panting against the side of the wall, while Eric lay on the platform, to all appearances lifeless.

"We can't stay here long," gasped Stuart. "See the water coming up!"

He pointed down the black well from which they had climbed so painfully. The rushing water and the falling in of ore banks made a terrifying uproar about them.

"We can get out on this level," replied his companion.

"What! How's that? We are eight hundred feet below ground here."

"The old Beury shaft opens into this drift. I walked in here this afternoon myself. Here is where I heard you shout for help. There! Don't you feel that breeze blowing through the drift?"

Stuart turned his face and felt the passing of a cool wave of air. And then it flashed across his memory that several years before, when a boy, he had himself climbed down into the old Beury shaft, which opened up on the side of the hill, and made his way to the level of the Davis mine where he now stood. The mines were sometimes connected in this way, though the abandoned passage would often become choked and blocked up by falling masses of ore.

But there was no time to lose, even with this unexpected avenue of escape. The two men caught up Eric and hurried, as fast as their burden would allow, up the passage connecting the main with the deserted shaft. After walking with their burden about two hundred feet the drift turned abruptly to the right and began to ascend sharply. It grew more difficult to carry Eric, but the danger from the water was now over. The old passage was really a tunnel let into the side of the hill at a sharp incline instead of a shaft sunk down vertically from above. When they had reached a point above the

immediate reach of the water they sank down exhausted again, and by the flickering light Stuart first noticed who his rescuer was.

"I haven't any cards with me, but I'll introduce myself," he said in a tone that made Stuart smile, and yet there was nothing flippant or lacking in seriousness about the man. "I am the new minister at the church with the clock in the tower—St. John's. I arrived in Champion two days ago. My name is Andrew Burke. You are Mr. Duncan, the mine owner? I am glad to meet you."

He reached out his hand and Stuart took it, clasp- ing it over the body of Eric. He felt a strange thrill as he did so. Somehow the peculiar formality of the man's speech struck him as a token of a special kind of strength. He seemed to feel that here was a man who, whatever his oddities, was possessed of qualities that were really very rare and valuable.

"I owe you my life, and that of my friend here," he said. "It all seems very strange to me, your appearance. I had given myself up for lost. I should certainly have drowned if you had not appeared."

"Yes, I think you would; that is, unless you had left the body of your friend here, and you don't look like the kind of man to do that. But we ought to move on. We need to get him to the doctor as soon as possible. My appearance here is very simple and I can tell that afterwards. Shall we move on?"

Stuart eagerly assented and they stumbled on up the tunnel. Their progress was very slow, for Eric was entirely like a dead weight, and neither Stuart nor his companion were powerful men physically. They had

gone but a short distance, however, when lights appeared farther up the shaft, and soon they were surrounded by a group of miners, accompanied by Dr. Saxon.

There was no time for more than the briefest explanations. The party took Eric from Stuart and the minister, and soon they were standing out on the side of the hill in the starlight. The cool night air blew about Stuart and he thanked God for life. Farther up on the hill a heap of blazing ruins marked the place where the engine house had stood, while at a distance the ladder hole smoked and flamed like a small volcano, showing that the timbers were blazing fiercely below.

"Take Eric to my house; we are not far from it," said Stuart.

"Yes, and hurry up, men," added the doctor. "I'll go on ahead with them, Stuart. Eric needs attention as soon as possible."

The doctor and the miners with Eric hurried down the hill, while Stuart followed with the minister as fast as he could. But now that the strain was over he felt weak and faint.

"You must come in and stop with me to-night, Mr. Burke. I want to know the story of your appearance in the mine. And, besides, I have not had time to thank you."

"I shall be glad to accept your invitation. In fact I feel the need of washing up before I go back to the town. I am stopping at the hotel," replied Burke.

As the two walked along, picking their way slowly down the narrow path, a peculiar noise came wafted up to them from the town. Stuart paused and listened.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Troops. They arrived this afternoon. That must be the drumbeat to quarters."

"I supposed the troops would not start until the last of the week. I had information to that effect from Cleveland."

"They came this afternoon, and that is one reason for your friend's injury, I imagine. We will talk it over and see." There was a pause, and the Rev. Andrew Burke suddenly exclaimed in a tone of relief, as if he had been searching for something, "Ah! here they are! I thought perhaps I had lost them!"

"What's that?" asked Stuart, peering through the darkness toward something his companion was holding out in his hand.

"Black ore crystals. Very rare specimens. If you have a match about you, I will show you."

Stuart could not help laughing. After all, was he not alive and safe after that experience of terror?

"I am afraid," he said, "that any matches I might have about me would hardly go off after the soaking I had. You see I was in the water up to my neck a part of the time."

"I beg your pardon," replied Andrew Burke. He seemed ashamed, and then as they were going up the avenue to the house he said gently: "You see I was out on a little geologizing walk this afternoon, and that is how I came to explore the old Beury tunnel. I found these crystals, and was just putting them into my pocket when I heard your cry for help. I was kneeling on the floor of the tunnel and had my head near the sides of the wall at the time, else I doubt if I had heard you. So

perhaps you will not think I am altogether a crank on specimens if in this instance the hunt for them led to something better."

"It was a fortunate find for us," replied Stuart. "Eric and I shall always bless you for your search. I am anxious about him. Come right in, and I will have one of the servants show you a room where you can be at home for the night."

They hurried in, only a little after the doctor and the miners, and Stuart, after directing one of the servants to see to Mr. Burke, went to Eric. The doctor was examining and dressing the wound.

"He has had a hard blow. Nothing fatal. We will pull him through. You had better get off those wet duds and look out for yourself. Thank God, Stuart, you are alive! This is the beginning of troubles here, I'm afraid. There has been crooked work to-day up on the hill, or I'm mistaken. That rock never fell down the ladder hole by accident, and the engine house didn't burn without some one's help."

Stuart looked thoughtful. He was still in the miner's dress, and if the occasion had not been serious the doctor might have been excused for smiling at his young friend's appearance. He was covered with the greasy red iron-ore mud, great streaks of it were over his face and hands; but the gravity of events that were evidently poising for a crisis left little room for anything but sober feeling. Stuart stood over Eric.

"Poor fellow! This comes at a bad time for him."

"Yes, and for us, too!" said the doctor sharply. "There's no telling what the men will do without Eric's

influence to keep them quiet. And it will be a question of weeks before he gets up from this."

"I hadn't thought of that!" Stuart put his hand on Eric's forehead. At that moment Eric opened his eyes. He was conscious and spoke feebly.

"Stuart, you saved my life. You have paid up old debts. You are quits with me now."

"Eric, we understand each other now, don't we?" Stuart spoke almost like a lover. "But we owe our lives to another man."

"How's that?" Eric was too faint to say more.

"I'll tell you when you are able to bear it. Rest now."

Eric closed his eyes, and Stuart went away to change his clothes, and all the while he felt conscious of the conviction that he stood close to the crisis of events which the evening's strange adventure had begun.

Louise had gone out somewhere to spend the evening with her friends the Vasplaines, so Stuart and the doctor and the new minister sat down to a late dinner by themselves, and it was while eating that Stuart learned the details of his rescue.

There was little more for Mr. Burke to tell. He was a stranger to the place, but in the two days of his residence in Champion he had evidently made the most of his time. He had inquired of a passing miner about the Beury tunnel just before entering it on his search for crystals. The miner had volunteered the statement about the connection with the Davis lower level. Burke had not thought of that again until he heard Stuart's cry for help.

"Do you always carry a rope with you on your afternoon walks?" asked Stuart.

"No, I have not been in the habit of doing so, but I think it might be a very useful custom in this mining country," replied Burke. "The rope was lying on the platform at the head of the last row of ladders, and I naturally carried it down with me, not knowing what might be needed at the bottom. I suppose the men left it there when the strike was declared. I noticed their tools lying around in various places as I came through the drift."

The doctor looked at the new minister with gruff approval. A man who could note details like that was worth knowing. The Rev. Andrew Burke was evidently on the way to the doctor's friendship.

"But how did you happen to come after us?" asked Stuart, turning to the doctor.

"I was up at Rollins', the pump man who was hurt, you remember, when the boy, the same one who came to the office the other day, came in and said the engine house was on fire; and after what seemed like a year's time we managed to pry out of him that he had seen you and Eric go down the ladders a little while before. I rushed over to the shaft, and here is the mystery of it to me. Not a soul was in sight. The engineer, firemen, and pump men were all gone. The ladders were blazing, so that there was no hope of descent by them. Some of the other men ran up from down town. Then we thought of the Beury tunnel and made a run for that. You know, Stuart, it's over a quarter of a mile from the shaft, but we made it in a few minutes. I fell over on a rock and smashed a lot of valuable bottles in my case. You've cost me a good sum, Stuart, counting all the days since you were born—you and Eric. I don't know

as I believe in stubbing my toe very much for that hot-headed young socialist and agitator. He will make a peck of trouble in the world, and I don't know but in the interest of humanity I ought to give him a little dose of something to finish him up."

Just then Eric, in the room across the hall, stirred and groaned. The doctor heard him and, dropping his napkin absent-mindedly into his soup, he hurried in to see his socialist patient.

Before he came back, Stuart and Burke discussed the fact of the engine-house fire. There was something to be cleared up about that. It seemed also to Stuart that the mass of iron ore which fell upon Eric was something more than a loosened fragment of the mine. The doctor was right about it. The absence of the men from the spot when the fire broke out also needed explanation.

The doctor had come back and the meal was progressing while the three men were trying to solve the facts of the burning and the injury to Eric, when a tramp of marching men was heard coming up the avenue.

The three men rose from the table together. There was a menace in the sound that was not easily mistaken. Stuart went directly into the hall and opened the great front door. By the light of the porch lamp could be seen a crowd, at least two hundred men, each one carrying his stick, which in most cases approached more nearly the dimensions of a club. They were a formidable appearing mob of men, their sullen, heavy faces brought into distinct relief in the light of the electric lamp.

"Well, men," called out Stuart clearly, "what is this?"

The men meanwhile crowded up close about the veranda. One of them, acting as spokesman, came up on the steps and said in a loud voice, "We want to see Eric."

"You can't see him. He's hurt. He isn't fit to see any one!" shouted the doctor, who stood just behind Stuart in the doorway.

"What do you want to see him for?" asked Stuart calmly.

The spokesman appeared confused and did not answer at once. Then here and there through the crowd rose cries from the men.

"There's been foul play!"

"We'll string up the men that did it!"

"Yes, hang 'em!"

"Show us Eric. We want him with us to-night!"

"Men," Stuart raised his voice, "Gordon here can come in and see for you that Eric is not able to move. Come in, Gordon, and see," continued Stuart, speaking to the miner who was standing upon the steps.

The miner, after a moment's hesitation, went into the house and the doctor went with him into the room at the right of the hall where Eric lay.

While they were gone Stuart told the men how Eric was hurt. There was breathless attention while Stuart was speaking. Just as he finished, Gordon came out.

"Boys," he said as he appeared on the veranda, "Eric's out of it to-night. We'll make it hot for the cowards that's done this."

"Ay, that we will!" cried a dozen voices.

"Three cheers for Mr. Duncan!" suddenly cried a

voice. The men could not help knowing from their experiences in the mines that Stuart had stayed by Eric during the danger, although he had said very little of himself in his narrative.

The cheers were given heartily, and Stuart felt for the first time in his life that perhaps the day would come when these men would understand him. He stepped out of the doorway, however, and pointing in to where Andrew Burke was standing said, "Thank you, men. But if it hadn't been for Mr. Burke here, Eric would not be safe. We owe our lives to him."

"Who's he?" rudely asked some one.

"The new minister at St. John's. I knows him," replied another.

"A minister, eh? Well, three cheers for him anyway!" cried another.

The cheers were given and the men began to move away. Stuart felt anxious, and exhausted as he was by the evening's adventure he could not help feeling that rough work would mark the night before it was over. He felt as if here was an opportunity to say a word while he was in favor with the men.

"Men, I want to say a word. I understand troops are in the town to-night. I hope you will all be law-abiding and"—

"Ay, we's heard that till we's sick of it!" The voice was evidently that of a drunken man.

Stuart for the first time realized that the element of the saloon had entered into the problem. Heretofore the men had kept away from the drink.

"Shut up!" exclaimed Gordon and others. "Give Mr. Duncan fair hearing."

"I say," continued Stuart, "that I hope you will not commit any violence. I am talking to you as I know Eric would if he was here."

"But how about men brought in to take the bread out of our mouths?"

"Ay, that's the stuff! We'll make it hot for them, troops or no troops."

"These are not my orders, you understand," said Stuart, feeling every minute more conscious of the nature of a restless mob of men who were deprived of their regular leader. I advise you to go to your homes in quiet. To-morrow we will investigate the burning of the engine house and the injury to Eric."

"What's the matter with to-night?" called out another man. The voice was calm and clear.

"Very well," replied Stuart with energy, thinking in a moment the restlessness of the men might be safely diverted into another channel. "It is my opinion that the men who burned the engine house overpowered the men at the top and have them somewhere in hiding at this moment. Are any of the Davis mine men here?"

The miners, familiar with every face in the Champion mines, answered in many places:—

"Not a man."

"Nobody's seen Davis men since the shaft was fired?"

"Mr. Duncan's hit it! He's a bright one."

Now then, men, if I'm right about it, the men are in hiding with the Davis crew. They can't be far off."

"We'll find 'em!" yelled more than one voice.

"Hold! Wait a minute!" cried Stuart as the men began to move again. "I want you to give me your

word that if the men are found you will not attempt to punish them yourselves. They have been guilty of breaking the law. Let the law deal with them. You have commended your cause to the world so far by your conduct. The minute you resort to violence of any kind, public sympathy will vanish. Give me your word now that you will hand these men over to the authorities if they are found."

There was a pause, and then from different ones came the response, "We promise. Ay, we's give the word."

Stuart felt satisfied, although there were several lawless men under the influence of drink who had not responded. The men moved off the lawn, and Stuart and the doctor and Mr. Burke saw the larger part of them go directly up the hill towards the smouldering ruins of the engine house. The rest straggled off down into town.

"There will be trouble in this town to-night," said the doctor. He went in to see Eric again, and Stuart and the minister remained in the hall. They talked together a little while, and Stuart was expressing his fears of the outcome when his telephone rang.

He went to it and conversed a moment. Then turning to Mr. Burke, he said, "Do you feel able to go out this evening?"

"Yes, I am lame a little and I do not look very presentable, but I feel able as far as that goes."

Stuart went to the hall closet and brought out an overcoat for Mr. Burke. He then put on his own, saying as he did so, "I've just had a message from the Iron Cliffs Company that the miners are gathering in a great

mob down in the square, and they think I had better come down and use my influence to prevent an outbreak."

"Do you feel able?"

"Yes, I guess so; I'm sore and lame, that's a fact, but no bones broken, and it seems a case of duty. The doctor will stay with Eric."

"He will, eh!" said the doctor, who just then came out of the room behind Stuart. "You're as much in need of watching as Eric. Take off that overcoat and go upstairs to bed!"

"Now, doctor," replied Stuart with a sad smile, "I don't like to say I won't, but I shall say it this time. I feel as if I ought to go down to the square. There is going to be a bad night's work, I'm afraid, but not without a protest from Mr. Burke and myself."

"All right, go your ways! And if you get your heads broken don't send for me to glue the pieces together again."

The doctor went back to Eric, and Stuart, after sending word that he and Mr. Burke would be right down, and after ordering the servants to bring around a horse and buggy, drove hurriedly away.

As they sped down the hill they passed several groups of miners swinging along the road at a smart foot pace. But when they reached the square there was so large a crowd gathered, overflowing into the streets, that Stuart drove around into one of the alleys and hitched his horse near the church at the rear. He and Burke then came out into the space bounded by the church and the railroad depot platform.

The miners had not been in the habit of assembling

at night. All their meetings up to this time had been at noon. Their present gathering was a new development of the strike; and as Stuart and the minister crowded in at the corner by the church they both said to themselves that there were elements of a very dangerous character compressed into that spot, the commercial and social center of the town.

In the first place there was an unusually large number of drunken men in the mob. It was growing noisier every minute. The band stand was crowded with miners. Two of them were trying to speak at the same time on opposite sides of the stand, and the confusion was doubled by their attempt. The mob of men swayed restlessly about the stand, which was lighted by an electric hanging lamp. The square was almost as light as in the daytime. Out on a side track of the railroad which skirted one side of the square the troops who had come in that afternoon were quartered in the coaches which brought them. There were two companies, and they had been ordered for some reason to remain over at Champion that night. Every allusion to the troops seemed to excite the miners to anger. The speakers in the stand mentioned them often and pointed towards their quarters. A good deal had happened that day to rouse even the sluggish, stolid men of the North. Eric's injury, while lamented by very many, was really cause for rejoicing by another large and rough element who were glad to have his leadership displaced by that of more radical but less capable men.

Stuart could not help saying, "If Eric were only here!" For the first time he realized what great power Eric had possessed. It was no small generalship to hold

this rough, turbulent mass of uneducated men in check. There was no one to take Eric's place.

Stuart had no definite plan to pursue in coming down to the square. The miners as they saw him spoke respectfully and asked after Eric. He and Burke were finally, in the progress of their walk, crowded up on the church steps, which were covered with men.

It was now about half-past eight o'clock, and the scene was of such a character that, worn as they were by the day's events, the two men stood looking out at the faces beneath them with a certain excitement that grew upon them with every second. The noise and confusion were increasing. A fight of some kind was already in progress in the band stand. Figures swayed back and forth there. The police force of Champion was meager at any time, and it was as powerless to manage such a crowd as this as if it had been composed of little children.

Suddenly, across all the other sounds in the square, rising over them, was heard the beat of drum. It was no feeble rattle of sticks, but a determined, vigorous, muscular onslaught on a bass drum by a strong right arm. And around the corner by the Iron Cliffs Company's office came a squad of men and women, not more than a dozen in all, bearing a flag and shouting as they came:—

"Our bark is sailing o'er life's sea, to a land beyond the blue,
We're going to the promised land 'long with the chosen few;
Aboard the bark there still is room for many, many more,
So come aboard and with us go to yonder happy shore.
Our bark is laden down with wealth, with pleasures rich and rare:
There's naught like them upon the earth, and we all may have a
share.

Just leave behind all worldly dross and come to God's own store,
Receive your gifts and with them cross to yonder happy shore."

Straight across the street the Salvation Army marched, singing this hymn to the tune of "O' a' the airts the winds can blaw," and as they reached the side of the square a peculiar thing happened.

The miners on that side opened up a passage for the little squad so that it could pass into the square. Acting on the impulse given by mobs at times, the miners began to crowd back on both sides and the army kept advancing, singing its song and marching in what seemed almost like a triumphal procession right down through the center of the square directly towards the church steps. The great heavy crowd seemed to part like magic, and down the avenue thus voluntarily provided the squad marched, beating its drum. The leader was a young woman, whose pale face possessed a prematurely aged look, but there was not a particle of self-consciousness to be seen upon it, and she marched at the front as proudly and with as queenly a bearing as if her following was composed of the picked archangels of heaven's hosts. High above the shrill treble and the hoarse bass of the others her voice went out as sweet as any that Stuart had ever heard, and he wondered where such a voice had been concealed in Champion that he had never heard it before. It sang as if the words were sacred to the heart:—

"Just leave behind all worldly dross and come to God's own store;
Receive your gifts and with them cross to yonder happy shore."

Close at the foot of the church steps the band halted. Here the crowd was very dense. It seemed a natural vantage ground for testimony and appeal. The miners for the time appeared to yield to the influence of this

attraction. Stuart said to himself, "Perhaps Eric will not be needed, after all." The scene had an intense interest for him now. He forgot all about Burke and the strike and his relations to it as the woman raised her hand as a signal for the drum to cease and then made another signal for the little company to kneel. Right down on the bottom steps of the church she kneeled, just below Stuart, and with the others kneeling about her, almost swallowed up in the mass of men who surged around, she offered a prayer, the memory of which lingered in Stuart's heart all his life.

CHAPTER IV.

A CHANGE.

L ORD JESUS,"—the pale face in the Salvation Army bonnet was raised, wholly unmindful of all the people in that great multitude,—“our hearts are longing to-night for lost souls, who have wandered far away from home. And we know that thou art sorrowing over them now, because thou art the Good Shepherd. O Lord Jesus, we want you to come down here to-night and lead some of these sheep into the fold. Some of them are so bruised and torn with sin that they will have to be carried, but, O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, we know you are strong and can bear them in the arms of infinite love over rough places, beside the chasms of Satan and through the wild torrents of death. Oh, for the Cross of Calvary to be stretched out like a great arm to save to-night! Oh, for the sweet forgiveness of sin to touch these human hearts right now! O Son of Mary, our hearts are bleeding; we are weary to death of the long-delayed coming of the miracle of redémption in these souls of men. Oh, bless us with the blood of the dying Saviour! Oh, raise us into new life with him who defied hell and death, although they were two to one! Jesus, I want you to come to-night. These men, these women, how precious they are! Who can tell what will be their fate if they should be called out of the world to-night? Their mothers,

Lord Jesus—these strong young men, some of them, have mothers praying for them. Oh, I have dreamed of the terror of the judgment for those who reject the Saviour! We are so in need of the power here and now. Open our eyes like those of the young man to see the horses and chariots of fire around about to-night. Save with the blood that was shed for all. Come now, Lord Jesus. We have followed. Make good the promise. Yes, we want some souls. We are hungry for some to cry out, 'Saved! saved!' We want to go triumphant into the judgment. We want to sing hallelujah before the great white throne with some of these poor lost sinners here by the side of us joining in the chorus with us. Oh, wash their sins away in the precious blood! Save them, save them, Lord Jesus!"

It was not so much the words of the prayer as its intense self-forgetful spirit that impressed Stuart as never in all his life before. He was not a Christian in the sense that he had ever confessed or joined a church. He had a reverent nature, and he had always lived by a code of morality that was for him sufficient. He was too well educated, or he thought he was, to be moved by anything purely emotional or coarse like the Salvation Army and its drums and shouts. But this was different somehow. The self-forgetfulness, the self-surrender, the agonizing longing for souls to be saved, all this was a part of the prayer as it swept up past him from the slight womanly form kneeling there. And never in all his experience, never in all his saunterings through great cathedrals and listening to chanted services, had he felt nearer to a truer knowledge of what God is in his great compelling love for sinful men.

All this took very little time, and he had no thought of acting in any way on his feelings. But while the woman was still on her knees a thing happened that in the end deepened his conviction and changed the course of possible events among the miners themselves.

The crowd was so large that only a very few could hear or see what was going on about the little band then at the foot of the church steps. It was true, at least it had been up to this time, that the Salvation Army in Champion had great influence over the miners. It was true still, but the demon of drink was abroad this night, and there is always a large and unsettling factor to reckon on when that is the case. The men nearest the little squad were pressed hard by those on the outside who wanted to see and hear what was going on. To prevent being shoved bodily upon the little company the miners, all the while the prayer was being offered, were silently exerting their great strength to keep the mob back. Before the kneeling figure could rise, however, a knot of drunken men burst through the circle which had been formed around her, and one of them with a kick sent his heavy boot through the drum, and another staggered with a drunken oath close up to the woman and raised his fist. Stuart, as he saw the face, thought that the rum-crazed man imagined the kneeling figure to be that of his own wife, who had more than once begged him on her knees to spare her and her children.

It was a flash of time, and Stuart gave the man a blow with his fist that knocked him swearing against a man behind him. Before any one could raise his arm again or strike a blow, the miners had seized on every

one of the assailants of the army, and a roar went up from the entire mass of excited and angered men. The influence of the army still was so strong with the great majority that it resented with the deepest indignation any indignity offered its little band of officers and men.

"Duck 'em in the fountain!" yelled some one with more than a touch of grim humor.

The "fountain" was a huge, cast-iron basin in the center of the square, which for several years had been used for a watering trough. It had about four feet of water in it, supplied from the pumping of the mines.

The suggestion was just suited to the coarse, rough spirit of the crowd. Struggling in the clutch of a number of brawny hands, the offenders were dragged up to the basin and flung into it. As fast as they floundered out, dripping and cursing, they were thrown in again. A great roar of laughter and shouts rose from the mob. In the midst of it all the army marched out of the square singing:—

"Come, sinners, to the Saviour now;
He wore the thorn-crown on his brow;
He shed his blood that you might be
Redeemed to all eternity.

CHORUS.

No more delay, for pardon cry;
Jesus your Saviour, is passing by."

There was the same dauntless look on the leader's face. No one could say that she was disappointed or disheartened by the seeming lack of answer to her prayer, or by the wild confusion all about her. The squad halted out in the street, and there another group gathered about them listening to testimony and prayer and song.

Stuart and the minister hesitated where they were for a moment, not knowing what to do now, when the crowd farthest away, over by the railroad tracks, began to run all together towards a smaller crowd coming down the hill from the Davis mine.

"I believe the men that did the burning are caught!" cried Stuart to Burke. The two struggled over in the direction of the hill and were met by the same company that had come out to the house demanding Eric.

The newcomers marched into the square, and one of them going up into the stand, told the news. They had found the engineer, fireman, and pump men locked into an old dry-room belonging to a recently abandoned mine about a mile up the hills, tied securely, but uninjured. There was no trace of the men who had done all this for the evident purpose of firing the engine house and getting rid of Eric and Stuart, as two men who would be likely to insist upon law and order as long as they had any influence. To the credit of the thousands of miners in all the ranges about Champion, the attempt was regarded by the vast majority as a cowardly and murderous act, a disgrace to the name of workingmen and a setback to the cause. There was special indignation expressed against the attempt to kill or injure Eric by throwing the mass of ore down the ladder hole. For that had been done, according to the story of the men who were overpowered at the shaft's mouth. One or two of them had been unwilling witnesses to the outrage.

The telling of this story and the appearance of the Davis men had the effect of sobering the crowd and causing it to disperse. The troops were forgotten for a

while. The new men sent over the road by the owners of the upper ranges would not pass through Champion anyway until the morrow. Groups of miners began to go off in companies towards their homes. Stuart saw that the danger for the evening was passed. The Salvation Army had marched off to its hall, and a large crowd had gone in after it. The square was now rapidly being cleared. He felt completely exhausted, now that the strain was over.

"You will spend the night with me, Mr. Burke?" he asked as the two walked out of the square over to where the horse had been left.

"No, Mr. Duncan; I believe I will remain down here, now I am so near my hotel quarters. Just as much under obligations to you. This has been a great day of experience for you. I hope you will not be the worse for it. The danger from the men seems over for to-night."

"Yes; I think so. Sorry you are not going out with me. It has been a day of experiences. I can't forget my indebtedness to you. We shall know each other better, I am sure. I need to know all the good men possible these days."

"I'm at your service, Mr. Duncan. Good night!"

"Good night." Stuart shook hands strongly and drove up the street tingling again from the pressure of that grasp. Andrew Burke's handshake suggested as much as some men's orations.

Stuart was so tired and ready for rest when he reached home that, after seeing Eric and being assured that he would get through the night with the watching of the nurse, sent for by the doctor, he went up to his room.

He slept hard, but wakened early and could not go to sleep again. He had dreamed of his experience in the mine and awoke at the point where he had heard Burke's voice. He went over the whole adventure again, and then irresistibly was drawn in thought down to the town square and in memory stood on the church steps a little above the kneeling figure that prayed. He found himself saying over the words of the prayer. To his surprise he could remember almost every sentence. Then he began to analyze his feelings, provoked by the expressions of the prayer. But his mind soon refused to criticise anything and, without any special reason for it, he began to ask if the saving of men was any more the Salvation Army's business than his own. He began to dwell on the word "saved" as it was used so often in the prayer. Then, by a logical step which he did not attempt to argue about as he might once have done, he was confronted with his own condition, and although he thought he tried to avoid answering the question, it persisted in being put: "Am I saved? What is Jesus to me?"

The whole matter was foreign to his moral code. Besides, how could a man in his present position, with all this labor trouble confronting him, attend to religious questions? Nevertheless he was forced to come back to the simple question, "Am I saved? What is Jesus to me?" All through the strange debate now going on within him he seemed to feel that he was being driven irresistibly to a point where he must answer or decide the matter of his own personal salvation.

He dressed, and in a growing excitement walked the room in the twilight. How are men converted? Was

Saul of Tarsus expecting to be met by the vision on the road to Damascus? Was it not as sudden and astonishing to him as a lightning bolt out of a cloudless evening? Does the Lord have any feeble limitations in his way of reaching men's souls or in the time he chooses? Stuart tried again and again to stop the persistent question that rose repeatedly to his lips, but to no purpose. He said: "I will go down and inquire about Eric." But he turned in his walk every time he faced his door and again paced back to the windows which opened on the front of the house. Gradually, as the light of the world grew stronger outside, another and an inward light grew in Stuart's soul. He watched it grow in awe of its strange revealing power. He saw himself as a child of God, with opportunities, powers, values, all of them hitherto used selfishly, and in and through all the rest he saw illumined a radiant cross. "What was Jesus to him?" The question grew with meaning. Why was the Jesus of history a figure to be respected simply? Of what value and meaning was the cross unless it became a personal redemption? The sunrise of the outer world was reddening the pines out on the hills. In a little while the sun would be looking out over the ranges and a new day would be born. But a new man was being born in the room of the Champion iron mine owner. The Sun of righteousness was rising in him and soon it would be daylight. Stuart trembled. He was alone. No man had spoken to him of salvation or of Christianity. But the divine presence had come at an unexpected moment, at what might have seemed at a most inopportune time, and his whole nature was in the hand of a power that he dared not resist. He almost

feared to breathe lest he should drive the heavenly presence away. He sat down and with his head bowed waited, it seemed to him, for something more to happen. And then he seemed to hear a voice say, "My son, give me thine heart." He clasped his hands together and replied, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" and with the words a flood of light poured in. He at once kneeled down. It was an unusual habit with him. Now it seemed as necessary as breathing, and as full of joy as loving.

How long he had been in that deep communion with his Saviour, so newly found, he could not have told. It must have been some time. He was roused by one of the servants knocking at the door and announcing breakfast. He went downstairs, and the first person to meet him in the hallway was Louise. It was a new world that Stuart was henceforth to know, and his heart went out to his sister this morning with a new tenderness. She put her arm about his neck as he stooped to kiss her.

"What a dreadful time you must have had, Stuart! It is a great blessing you were not killed in that awful mine. The doctor has been telling me about it."

"Yes, I feel as if my life had been spared for some great reason," replied Stuart. "How is Eric this morning?" He put his arm about Louise and moved with her towards the door of Eric's room, which was near by. Louise slipped away from him and answered, "Oh, he is getting on all right. I don't want to see him. Don't wait breakfast long, Stuart."

She crossed over into the dining room and Stuart went in to see Eric, who still lay in the downstairs bed-

room which remained a feature of Ross Duncan's house as he had first designed and built it.

The doctor was there by the bed. He had come up early. He had attended to the wound, and Eric was resting comfortably. He lay there looking very pale and almost stern. Stuart felt an added tenderness for the man who had been his companion in that hour of peril. Somehow the experience of the morning deepened and enlarged all his thoughts of friendship and love.

He kneeled down by the bed and smiled as Eric turned his dark eyes towards him.

"What sort of a night did you have, dear fellow," he asked as he laid his hand in Eric's.

"Oh, I rested well. I'm able to get up this morning, but the doctor here won't let me move."

"You can get up if you want to," replied Dr. Saxon gruffly. "Stuart, please order my horse around so I can get around to the undertaker's in time to make arrangements with him for Eric's funeral. Do you want the hearse with the black plumes all around the top, or the other one with the weeping urn arrangement in the middle?"

"Nonsense! I'm not so bad off as that!" replied Eric with a feeble attempt at a smile.

"You will be if you get out of that bed for two weeks," replied the doctor as he gathered up his things to go. "Besides, you can't get up if you want to. Stuart, I leave him in your care. The nurse will be able to attend him all right. She has full instructions." And with a word or two more the doctor went out of the house and whirling down the hill.

Stuart remained a few minutes with Eric and then went in to breakfast. There was a good deal to talk over. Louise asked questions about the accident. Stuart answered, feeling all the time that everybody about him had changed since that Light had dawned upon him. Even Louise could see and feel a difference, although she could not tell what it was. Finally she stopped in her questions about the mines and said:—

“What is the matter with you, Stuart? What has happened? Are you ill from the effects of your exposure yesterday?”

Stuart looked across the table at her and it was several moments before he replied. Then he said: “I will tell you, dear, when we are alone. I want time to think. No, I am not ill. I feel better than I have in a long time.”

Louise looked surprised, but she asked nothing more and went on to tell about the gathering at the Vasplaines’ the evening before. Stuart listened thoughtfully, now and then putting a question, and at last Louise came back to the subject of the miners.

“Now that troops have been ordered, I suppose the strike will end, won’t it?”

“I don’t know. Maybe it will just begin.”

“But don’t you intend to get new men in? All the mines in the lower range are bringing in new men to-day. It is an outrage for the men to prevent others from working!”

“There will be trouble, I am afraid, before the day is over,” replied Stuart. He faced a most serious problem, and he found his heart crying out for wisdom from the diviner source he was beginning to know.

"Well, I don't understand you, Stuart. If father was alive, he would have a thousand men here in Champion ready to go to work this morning, instead of waiting for the other men to accept terms he had made, only to have them foolishly rejected. If they won't work on their own terms, which you say you offered them, how can they blame you if you get new men in and protect them by law? If I were a man, I would teach those men a lesson! Look at the way they have treated you and Eric. They"—

Louise looked prettier than ever as she stamped her foot under the table. Stuart sat silent and sober. Just then the telephone rang. He went over and after a few moments came into tell Louise he would have to go down to the Iron Cliff's office. Word had been sent up that he was needed.

"Aunt Royal is coming in on the noon train, Stuart, you remember. Shall I drive down and get her?"

"Yes, dear; I don't know how the morning's business will occupy me. I wish you would see to her." Stuart leaned over Louise as she sat at the table and kissed her again.

"And do have some sense about this strike business. Get new men in. What can you do if all the other owners start up again?"

"I'll do the best thing," replied Stuart gently. He went into Eric's room a minute.

"I'm sorry to leave you, Eric," he said affectionately.

Eric groaned. "To think of my lying here, of all times in my life! Stuart, I must get up and go with you. The men"—

Eric tried to raise himself, but fell back with a cry of pain. The sweat stood out on his forehead in large drops. He clinched his hands and his teeth in a sort of rage that was not only terrible to see but pitiful.

As Stuart stood by him there was a great feeling of compassion in his heart for him. "Eric, you will have to be patient. After all, the men have not broken over the law yet. With the exception of the men who fired the engine house, I believe the most of them are minded to be law-abiding."

"Not if they get to drinking," replied Eric with a spasm of pain crossing his face. "They are devils when they drink. Curse the saloons! They will be the ruin of our cause yet. You will do all you can, Stuart, to hold the men in check? The troops are coming in to-day and the new men. O God! if I was only with my men to-day, I believe I could control them!"

"Yes, yes, Eric, I'll do my best. After all, are we not in the hands of One who knows the end from the beginning?"

Eric stared at Stuart in astonishment.

Stuart continued as he leaned over the bed: "Eric, the Light has shone upon me. God has spoken to me. I am a Christian. It has all come to me suddenly."

Eric was too bewildered to understand all that was meant by Stuart's confession. He feebly returned Stuart's hand grasp.

Stuart added simply, "I will tell you more when I get back." Then, after a pause, "God bless you, Eric! God help us to solve these questions with his wisdom, for ours is weakness and foolishness."

Eric's eyes were shut. Then a tear stole out from

the closed lids and rolled over the pale cheek, and Stuart left him so.

He hurried down into the town and drove first out to Eric's cottage, which was on a side street three blocks from the square. Eric's father and mother were dead, and he was not married; he was living with his grandmother and two cousins, young boys who expected in time to enter the mines. Eric's home life was strange and had its influence on his life to shape it as it was. Stuart left word with the grandmother that Eric would be with him for a while, and then drove back into the square and went into the office.

It was the old office room of his father, but since Ross Duncan's death it had become a sort of headquarters for several mine owners who had railroad interests in Champion and mining property in the other ranges. Three or four of these men greeted Stuart as he came in and at once began to argue with him about his course in the strike and its probable results on the outcome of it.

"Now, Duncan," said one of the men, a large florid man who wore a big seal on a heavy watch chain and looked "important," "it is necessary for us all to move together in this matter; things have got to a point now where it is a question whether we are running our own business or having it run for us by a lot of wild, ignorant fanatics engineered by Salvation Army cranks and other fools of the sort."

Stuart had all he could do to keep from striking the man in the mouth as he spoke of the Salvation Army. That delicate face in the army bonnet, that kneeling figure in the midst of the mob, that prayer, the sweet,

clear, refined voice, all smote his imagination and memory as his eyes looked past the big man, out of the window which opened on the scenes of the past evening. It was good proof, perhaps, of the genuine nature of Stuart's new manhood that he calmly listened until the speaker was through and then said quietly: "I do not regard the Salvation Army as you do, Mr. Wyman. My dearest friend, Eric Vassall, is a member of it; and I believe we owe our freedom so far from lawlessness to the religious influence exerted by the army."

Stuart's reply surprised all the other men. The big man reddened and was about to say something when one of the others spoke up:—

"That aside, Mr. Duncan, we do not see your reason for refusing to get new men in and starting up again. Your refusal gives the strikers encouragement."

"I believe they ought to have the scale they demand," replied Stuart quietly.

"We don't!" exclaimed the first speaker viciously. "I'll see every striker starve before I'll grant anything like the terms they ask. The price of ore at present wouldn't allow it."

"But," said another of the men, speaking to Stuart, who remained standing in the middle of the room, "the Cleveland men are determined to set new men at work to-day. The first load will come in on the noon train. Troops are coming with them. The two companies that were here last night have gone on down to the lower range early this morning. We have the game in our own hands if we act together. You are the largest owner here. A good deal depends on your action."

Stuart pondered. The men all looked at him anx-

iously. At last he looked straight at them and his face lighted up.

"I have given the men my word that I would take them back at their terms. They have refused to come back unless all the other owners make the same terms. I still think I am right in the matter, and the rest of you ought to grant their demands. I do not see how in honesty to my own convictions I can do otherwise. My present refusal to get in new men is certainly not adding to the danger of the situation here in Champion. Gentlemen,"—Stuart paused for a moment, then went on firmly,—"I cannot see my way clear to hire the men at smaller wages than two dollars a day. I do not agree with the statement that the price of ore does not warrant the increase in wages. I firmly believe it does. The plain fact is that the work of the men is such dangerous, difficult work that two dollars a day is little enough for the labor. There isn't a man of us here or in Cleveland who would do the work these men do for ten times two dollars a day. I cannot look at it as you do. I shall do my utmost to prevent trouble, but if at any time during the strike my men come back, I will open up with two dollars a day for the underground men."

The other men looked at Stuart in added astonishment. There was silence in the office, broken finally by the big man who had spoken first:—

"Well, that beats me! If I ever expected to hear a son of Ross Duncan make a socialistic labor speech! You ought to go on the platform, sir!"

The manner of the remark was so offensive that Stuart grew pale and trembled. But he controlled his

passion and turned to the other men. For half an hour more they talked animatedly, while the big man sulked and smoked a bad cigar in the corner. At last Stuart saw that he was not and could not be understood. He could not give his best reasons for his position to these men. They lay too deep at the foundations of his newly found life to be explained to men whose spiritual natures were buried under cash values of existence.

When he was convinced that all the talk would result in nothing satisfactory, Stuart went out. He felt the need of something that responded to his own life. He felt choked and "poisoned" (he could not think of a less strong word) as he realized how firm a hold the love of money had on the business world. All the time he cried out in his heart, "God help me! I want to do the right thing, and will do it as fast as the light comes." He examined his position towards the strike so far in the light of his Christian discipleship and heard no accusing voice in his heart over the judgment that he had declared to be just, and as he went out into the street he felt at peace, as far as that was concerned.

As he walked the street thinking it all over, he had a great desire to have a talk with some one he could trust who would sympathize with him. At once he thought of the new minister. "I ought to go and inquire about him, anyway." He quickened his pace across the street, entered the square, and took one of the diagonal paths to the hotel where Burke was staying.

He found Andrew Burke going through the hotel office with a large box. He saw Stuart coming in, and exclaimed:—

"Come up! come up, Mr. Duncan! I've got some beauties here; I want you to see them."

Stuart followed up one flight of stairs, and entered a large room in the corner of the hotel, and Andrew Burke set down his burden, shook hands strongly, and asked Stuart to excuse him while he opened his box. Stuart looked on wonderingly.

It was a box full of potted plants, young roses, most of them. As fast as Burke took them out he arranged them on a temporary shelf by the window.

"There's a Nyphetis, one of the most delicate roses going. And here is my Keizerine; that's a new variety just out this year. This Catherine Mermet is a beauty. Very hard to get a bloom in this climate, I fear. The Safrano is better. And just see here! I raised this Meteor myself and had six magnificent blooms from it last winter! You see, my wife was visiting some relatives in the East when my call came to come up here, and I try to amuse myself until she arrives with rocks and roses. Those are my pets. Let me show you some of my friends since I got here."

The Rev. Andrew Burke brought out a tray from another room and set it down on the table near Stuart. Then he noticed the look on Stuart's face, and his whole manner underwent a swift and remarkable change. He looked and spoke like the strong, deep, true man that he really was in spite of his "rocks and roses."

"Mr. Duncan, you did not come here to talk botany or geology, did you?"

"To tell the truth, I did not, Mr. Burke."

"What is it?" asked Andrew Burke, leaning forward and putting a hand on Stuart's arm.

It was a simple question, simply put. But it revealed so strong and genuine a desire to know and sympathize with him that before Stuart knew it he was telling his experience of the morning. The tea-rose odor of the plants in the window and on the table filled the room, and Andrew Burke listened with kindling eye and long-drawn breath. "Thank God! Thank God!" he was saying as Stuart went on. When Stuart finally paused, Andrew said, "Can't we have a little prayer of thanksgiving over this, right here as we sit?"

"Yes, yes," replied Stuart gladly.

Before Andrew Burke was through with his prayer, Stuart was sobbing. It was the first real touch of Christian sympathy he had ever known. It was wonderful to him, though, to think that he was now linked in sympathetic knowledge with every other disciple. In the next few moments of question and answer he experienced one of the rarest and sweetest joys of his life.

It was not a shock to anything to find himself at last talking over the strike and its problems with Burke. After all, was that not a part of life, and was not all of it henceforth to be lived to the glory of God?

He was relieved to have Burke agree with his decision as to wages.

"My sympathies are with the workmen, Mr. Duncan. In fact I was born on a farm and raised in a factory. I'll tell you about it some time."

"I am going to make a request," said Stuart with a smile. "Do you think a man who saves another man's life ought to call him 'Mister' very long?"

"What shall I say?"

"'Stuart' is not a hard name to pronounce, is it?"

"No harder than 'Andrew.'"

"It's a bargain then. No more 'Misters.'"

"Eh! but this is sudden, young man," replied Andrew Burke, rising and coming over nearer Stuart. "I'm ten years your senior and you need my advice. It's a bargain, yes."

The two men shook hands again and thoroughly understood each other. It was the Christian fellowship that made such swift friendship possible. On any other basis these two men would have saved each the life of the other every day and "mistered" each other to a gray old age.

But events in the outer world were hurrying on fast, and Stuart could not avoid a feeling of anxiety concerning the train due at noon with the new men and the troops. Already the miners were gathering in the square. Looking out of the hotel window, the two men could see that the miners were excited and that the gathering was massing about the depot, rather than around the band stand.

"I believe I will go down and if there is any trouble I will do all in my power to prevent violence," said Stuart.

"Let me go with you," replied Andrew Burke.

So it happened that these two stood close by the depot when the noon train came in and saw the whole scene, which no man present that day ever forgot.

The train came in slowly and the miners watched it in sullen silence. The first two coaches were filled with troops. The rest of the cars, six in all, contained the new men.

It was not known until long afterwards just how the

events of that day were planned and carried out, but before the engineer or fireman could offer any resistance, even if they had thought of such a thing, they were pulled down out of the cab and in a twinkling the tender was uncoupled from the coaches and two of the miners who understood the working of the engine started it forward and switched it off the main track upon one of the tracks built by the side of the ore chutes.

Meanwhile the miners at the rear of the train began to call out to the men in the coaches to get out and show themselves.

"We wants to see the brave men who have come up to take bread out of us mouths!" "Show yourselves! Come out and have a taste of a club!"

While this was going on at the rear, the officer of the troops, seeing what had happened to the engine, promptly ordered his men out of the coaches and formed across the track and by the side of the rear coaches to defend the men within.

The commanding officer was a young man of handsome appearance, and he seemed cool and determined. As the troops took their position the crowd gave back a little, leaving a space of perhaps twenty feet between the line and the crowd.

It was a critical moment and needed only one act of violence to precipitate a crisis. And that one act was forthcoming. As the officer turned to give command, a drunken man threw a mass of ore with murderous strength right into his face, and he fell to the ground with the blood spattering the uniform of the man nearest him.

Stuart from his position on the platform tried to

make himself heard. The officer next in command stepped out and in a voice that rose over the roar of the wild beast rising in the mob, shouted, "Make ready!" But before he could add the words "aim," or "fire," a woman suddenly flung herself, as it seemed, right out of the mob and ran up directly in front of the leveled guns. She stood alone in the little space between the troops and the miners. Stuart recognized the Salvation Army leader of the night before. Her face was pale, but she was calm, and without any appearance of playing a part or doing anything unusual or unexpected she stood there, with the muzzles of the guns almost touching her.

CHAPTER V.

AN EXCITING TIME.

FOR a moment the woman stood confronting the soldiers. Then she turned and spoke, in the midst of a deathly silence that was almost as terrifying as the howl of the mob a few seconds before.

"My brothers, in the name of God and his dear Son, our Saviour, remember what you are, and as you value heaven do no wrong to-day."

The miners heard and for a moment the silence was unbroken. It was one of those moments which prove men to be equal or wanting to an emergency. And Stuart in that brief time grew in strength and experience. He was in the open space before Andrew or any one else moved, and standing by the woman, the leveled guns now touching them both. The minute Stuart leaped into the space between the troops and the miners, the woman turned and kneeled by the side of the wounded officer. Stuart was conscious of the fact that men were carrying the body out of the ranks, and that the young woman was behind them, following. All that he felt rather than saw as he stood there.

"Men," he said, praying in his heart for wisdom to say just the right word, "listen to me a moment! Every man who strikes a lawless blow here to-day, strikes at the cause of labor. If you want to set it back and destroy your own best good, now is your opportunity. It

will be the act of madmen to do it. In God's name, in the name of the law and of your best interests, I beg of you to use reason. For the sake of Eric, who loves you if ever man did, let these men go their ways and abide the results as law-fearing, God-fearing men!"

There was a stir all through the crowd while Stuart spoke. Then the silence was broken by cries here and there by men who had helped Eric in the organization of the Union.

"He's right! Mr. Duncan tells truth."

"Let's keep law. We be fools otherwise!"

"Ay, we's fools a'ready!"

"Better for us to get men to go back!"

This last cry was caught up by large numbers, and the mob fairly swarmed around the coaches containing the new men. During the events just described they had remained inside, but the windows were alive with heads thrust out to see what was going on.

Stuart felt that the immediate danger of collision was over. There was, however, still any number of chances for an outbreak. The troops lowered their guns but remained on guard.

The scene around the coaches now assumed an intensely pathetic character. With it all there was an element of danger and the stirring of the fickle wild beast in the mob.

"Now, boys," pleaded an old miner, standing close up by one of the coaches, "you doesn't want to take bread out of us mouths up here, does you? Come! Say ye'll go back and leave us to fight it out with the masters. We make to win if let alone."

"Ay, that we will," said another eagerly. "The own-

ers is losing on contracts every day now. Give us a chance. What have we done to you that you should come up here to take away our wages?"

"We've got families too," replied a gruff voice from one of the windows. "And no work for over a month, and women and babies crying at home. What would you have us do?"

This was a hard question to answer, and no one tried it; but hundreds of voices were beseeching the newcomers to go back and leave the mine owners to struggle with their old men.

At last one of the miners, a middle-aged man who had helped to organize the Union, and next to Eric was as influential as any one in Champion, secured a hearing. He mounted one of the switch blocks, and the men anxiously listened.

"Tell you what the Union will do. We agree to pay the fares of every man here back to his home and something over if you go back on next train."

"Ay, that's the thing!" yelled a hundred voices. As a matter of fact the Union numbering now nearly five thousand men, was in a position to do this, and in the desperate fight it was making it could afford to wring every possible cent from its members rather than give way to the influx of new hands. Once the mines opened up their chances of bringing the owners to terms would be gone forever. Besides, there was no telling what events might occur if once public sympathy was large enough to enlist other workingmen with them.

The appeals now made to the men in the coaches were frantic. Miners climbed up on the platforms and squeezed inside the cars to argue with the men. It was

a scene of peculiar interest. One great swarm of hard-fisted and hard-faced men begging another crowd of the same kind to keep from exercising the natural desire to work for home and children. Surely what was first pronounced as a curse on our first parents has now become a double curse when work is the object of such a strange contest.

It would perhaps be difficult to tell how far the strangers were influenced by their sympathy for the miners, or whether the sight of a thousand men carrying walking-sticks the size of a man's arm had its weight in bringing them to a decision. There were about five hundred men in all. At last about four hundred of them said they would go back on the condition that the Union do as it agreed.

They came out of the coaches and were received with a tremendous burst of cheers and shouts. The remaining men, who for one reason and another refused to go back, were saluted with hisses, jeers, threats, and abuse; but no violence was offered. The miners felt jubilant over the result of their appeal, and were disposed to ridicule the handful of men now left.

"Let 'em go on, boys! What can the miners do with such a handful of greenies?"

"Ay, let 'em go! They don't know enough to get out of the way of a blast, nohow!"

"Let the men at De Mott treat 'em. They's two to our one down there!"

Meanwhile, at the other end of the train, matters were in the hands of Stuart and the local police of Champion. It is not too much to say that Stuart within the last twenty-four hours had grown immensely popular

with the miners. The conference at the Iron Cliffs office that morning and Stuart's speech had leaked out somehow, and that accounted in part for his influence at this particularly critical time. At any rate, he successfully appealed to the men to stand by the officers of the law when they came up and arrested the man who had thrown the ore and wounded the officer. The arrest was made without any resistance on the part of the miners who were at the end of the train. While that was going on, Stuart prevailed on the men to bring back the engine and couple it on to the train again.

The wounded officer had been taken to the hotel and Dr. Saxon had been summoned. Stuart assured the officer in command that he would be personally responsible for his well-being. The miners with their four hundred new recruits began to march into the square with the strangers massed in the middle. The agent of the mine owners, who had been in mortal terror during all the excitement and was actually hiding behind one of the seats in the coach that brought the troops, now came out on the platform, cursing the entire situation. The officer in command grimly wanted to know what he was going to do about it.

In reality there was nothing to be done but to go on with the handful of men left. The idea of trying to get the men back, now that they were practically surrounded by the mob, was not a pleasant idea to entertain. The agent satisfied himself of that fact very speedily. The officers and troops climbed into the coaches again and the train started off down the range. A mighty cheer from the miners went up as the train disappeared. The whole event had taken less than twenty

minutes. To Stuart it seemed like an hour. He was growing old very fast since his father died and left him in possession of his millions.

But he thought to himself that he was at the very beginning of his problem, and every event complicated the entire situation. He could not see the outcome. The only thing his heart rested back upon was his newly found life, which even in this excitement proved to be the most triumphant part of his consciousness. In thinking it over afterwards he recalled with particular pleasure the fact that at the very moment of his leaping in between the miners and the leveled guns he said to himself, "I am a disciple of Christ. If I die, I shall be with him in Paradise."

He made his way through the different groups of miners now crowding into the square and went on into the hotel. He wanted to inquire about the officer. Andrew had already gone on before.

The landlord ushered Stuart into the room where the man had been carried. The doctor had just arrived.

Stuart went in and the first person to meet him was Andrew. He had been one of the men to help carry the unconscious officer out of the ranks. Kneeling by the side of the wounded man was the leader of the Salvation Army. She had at once done the right thing in her care of the case, and the minute the doctor saw it he growled out something about that being the proper treatment.

He quickly went to work and accepted the help of the young woman as a matter of course. Stuart and Andrew stood silently by, assisting a little as the doctor asked for things. "He'll never want to sit for his pho-

tograph again," remarked the doctor grimly, as he finally paused and rose to his feet after doing all in his power. "This strike is bringing me in a lot of unsolicited practice. I suppose I can send my bill in to the State for this case. But if the troops begin to fire into the miners I shall go bankrupt sewing them up and sawing off their heads and legs for nothing. Thank you, madam;" the doctor turned to the figure in the Salvation Army costume as she stood calmly looking down at the still unconscious officer. "You're a good one to help. You have been a nurse or I'm mistaken."

"Yes, sir, I served a full term in Bellevue."

The doctor looked at her with added respect. "You have the touch of a lady," he said politely. That was the height of compliment from him.

"I am one," replied the young woman demurely. Stuart thought she smiled faintly. She had a naturally serious face, but at times it could be remarkably winning in its sudden lighting up of the personality.

The doctor coughed to hide his embarrassment at the reply, and then said: "I should be glad to introduce you to these gentlemen here, lady," he added with a ludicrous hesitation, "if I knew your name."

"I am Miss Dwight. I am with the army here for the present," she answered with perfect self-possession.

"This is Mr. Duncan, the owner of the Champion mines; and this is Mr. Burke, the minister of St. John's," said the doctor, turning to Stuart and Andrew.

She turned and bowed quietly while the doctor busied himself with his patient again.

"You are Miss Dwight, the daughter of Allen

Dwight?" asked Stuart eagerly. The minute he spoke he wished he could recall his words.

But the exclamation seemed to affect the young woman only for a moment. Then she answered, "Yes, Allen Dwight is my father." She added while a slight color swept over her pale face: "You played the part of a brave man to-day, Mr. Duncan. I want to thank you in behalf of the poor fellows who seemed to me so like sheep without a shepherd. How Christ would have looked on them with compassion!"

Her gaze was out of the window past Stuart, who was standing near it. The square was crowded with the men. Some one had gone up into the stand and was speaking. Stuart felt as never before what a sad and thrilling sight a great unguided multitude was. For the first time in his life he felt able to look at it through Christ's eyes. But he was also agitated over his meeting with Rhena Dwight. She had turned to the doctor and in a low tone asked a question. The doctor nodded his head and she went out. She did not return, and Stuart, after seeing that everything possible was being done for the sufferer, started for home.

On the way he had leisure to recall the facts which the excitement of the past days crowded out of his mind; that Allen Dwight's daughter had, some three years before, while Stuart was in college, surprised and astounded the society circle in New York, of which she had been the leader, by suddenly leaving her home and all her fashionable surroundings to enter the Salvation Army. He remembered what sensational accounts appeared in the papers. Above all, he recalled vividly the effect the news had on her brother, who at the time

was a classmate of Stuart. He could also remember talking it over with Louise when he came home for his Christmas vacation.

Louise was shocked as deeply as it was in her capacity to be shocked to think that a girl who had such a career before her, gifted with such talents, musical and social, should give them all up to fling her life away in the slums over horrid, dirty, drunken, miserable people. "She must be crazy," said Louise. "Her father was right in saying, if the report was true, that Rhena never should come into his home again as his daughter." His aristocratic family connections were very deeply disgraced by the event. His own standing in society was under a cloud. He felt the shame of it with great bitterness and never alluded to it.

All this Stuart called up as he neared home. He had never met Miss Dwight before, and knew nothing of her reasons for the complete change in her life. He wondered thoughtfully if it had not been something like the experience that had come to himself that morning.

Louise met him with the news that his Aunt Royal, who had been expected on the noon train, had telegraphed that she had waited over a day on account of the troubles liable to follow the bringing of the troops. Ross Duncan's sister had planned for some time to come and make Louise a visit and be with her through the winter if Louise wished.

"Eric has been calling for you. He is very nervous. Life isn't worth living with all this excitement over these labor troubles!" said Louise sharply. "When Aunt Royal comes, I mean to plan for something besides all this."

Stuart did not reply and went in to see Eric, while Louise walked into the parlor and began to thump the piano as hard as she could. She was angry with Stuart, and vexed with everything in general.

"Well, old fellow," said Stuart cheerfully, "we had an exciting time, but no one killed yet, and I think the worst is over."

"Tell me about it." Eric tried to sit up a little and nervously moved his fingers over the bedclothes.

Stuart briefly described the scene at the train, and Eric listened with frowning brow and strained muscles.

"That Salvation lass must be a brave one. Who did you say she was?"

"Miss Dwight. She has just come up here, I understand, within a day or two." And Stuart went on to tell Eric her story as he knew it. Eric listened with great eagerness. Then he inquired about the men; how they had behaved, what they were planning to do, what the next move would be, whether the men who had gone on down to the lower range would probably go into the mines or whether they would be prevented by the miners.

"I tell you, Stuart," said Eric after question and answer had been going for several minutes in this way, "I must get up out of this, and very soon too. The doctor can't keep me here two weeks, because I mean to be carried down to the square if I can't walk. Now is just the time when I ought to be with the men. If they once begin to break over the law, the cause of labor will suffer a setback that it cannot recover from for years."

"That's true. But there is a lawless element already roused that is growing worse every day. If a gun had

gone off this noon, I doubt if a soldier of the entire number of troops would have left the spot alive. The men would have climbed over a hundred dead bodies to tear the soldiers in pieces. I think I never came so near to seeing the claws of the wild beast in the mob in all my life."

"Ah!" replied Eric, sadly, "I have seen them more than once. Heaven grant you don't see what I have." He referred to scenes which had occurred when he was a boy in the coal regions of England. Stuart had often talked them over with Eric.

"Amen," answered Stuart. He remained silent then, his thoughts busy with the events of the morning. He was casting about for a good opportunity to tell Eric his experience at the beginning of the day. In the midst of all the perplexing and complicated situation in which he was now placed, Stuart went back repeatedly to his change of attitude towards all the facts of his own life. That must have been a tremendous event to hold so supreme a place in his mind as it did.

Just then Louise went by the door and called out, as she went on into the dining room, "Lunch is ready!" Stuart had forgotten all about eating, but he left Eric to go in and keep Louise company.

All the time he was eating he felt that he must tell his sister the facts about his — what did he call it? The word "conversion" had always been distasteful to him, but what had happened to him? Something very remarkable, and so remarkable that it seized on him and held him in a loving and joyful grasp, making him feel that all other matters were as nothing compared with this. He was not of

an emotional nature. His whole education and training were of such a nature that he had always prided himself on being a refined, self-possessed man of the world, telling the truth, lively purely, being strictly honest and brave, but without exhibition of passion or feeling, except at rare intervals when a strange, hereditary outburst would sweep away all traditions as if he were mad.

But now he felt as if a new passion had caught him up and held him; a new life swayed his whole being; he was calm, and yet he felt thrilled with this new existence. There was no yesterdays any more. Everything was to-day and to-morrow. Jesus was the one great central, throbbing, pulsing, moving impulse with him. He was a new man. And yet men say, superficially, sometimes in these days, that the times of miracles are gone by. Is there a greater miracle in all the earth than when a human being like Stuart Duncan is born again, made a new man in Christ Jesus?

As soon as lunch was ended, Stuart had resolved what to do. He must tell Louise. There must be the truest and frankest understanding between them on this matter. It was too vital to be neglected or passed over or postponed.

"Louise," he said as they went into the drawing room together, "I want to tell you something, now we are alone."

Louise did not reply, and Stuart went on, feeling the gap between his sister and this new life of his to be wider and deeper with every word he uttered.

"Early this morning I had a very remarkable experience," Stuart continued. "I had what seemed like

a vision of my real life, and it was very distinct to me that all these years I had been neglecting the one most important part of my life." Stuart hesitated a moment as Louise sat looking at him in silent astonishment. "I have decided, Louise, that I must be a Christian."

There was an embarrassing silence. Louise colored and looked away from Stuart. At last she said in a low voice, "What do you mean?"

Stuart did not know what to say at first. He felt that Louise would not understand him, but he spoke with the directness and simplicity that seemed demanded by the occasion.

"I mean, dear, that I am going to live a new life, with God's help. I look at everything differently. I never used to think of Christ as anything more than a historical figure. Now he seems to me like a personal friend. More than that, he seems to be my own personal Saviour. I never knew before what the words 'saved' and 'salvation' meant to me. Now they are real. They apply to my own condition. I seem to look at all the events of life, my own and others, in the light of eternity. It is difficult for me to make all this clear to you, Louise. Would you understand it any better if I should use the old word 'conversion,' and say I had an experience this morning that has converted me to a Christian life?"

"No; I don't know as I would," Louise replied coldly. She had gone over to the piano and sat down on the stool, facing Stuart, but not looking into his face.

"Can't you understand me, Louise?" cried Stuart. His disappointment was very great, although he had been prepared for something of this kind before he spoke.

"No, I don't understand, Stuart. It is very strange. You seem to think you haven't been a Christian all this time. You speak as if I wasn't one?"

"Are you, Louise?" asked Stuart gently. But the question provoked her as he had not foreseen. He wished strongly afterwards that he had not put it. It seemed as if he was judging her from his own Christian experience, not yet a day old.

"Yes, I am! What am I? A heathen?" Louise stamped her foot, as she always did when angry. Stuart saw that her thought of the word was not his. He remained silent, and Louise turned about on the piano stool and struck a few chords fitfully. Then she wheeled back and said bluntly, "What are you going to do? Join the Salvation Army?"

Stuart shrunk back as if from a blow. It was all so contrary to his experience that he was entirely unable to shape his speech as usual. He was silent until Louise repeated her question.

"I shall join the St. John's church. And I may join the army too. I understand people can do that, without belonging to the ranks, in one way."

Louise rose to her feet with a look of scorn that Stuart could not endure. "Well, father ought to be here to see all this! He would want to know if this is Stuart Duncan, his son."

"It is true he would not see the old Stuart Duncan," replied Stuart with a noble dignity that even Louise could not help noticing, "but he would find a better one, I hope. Louise, dear, I wish you could understand just what I have felt. It is impossible for me to look on very many things as I did once. I want to say this to you

now, so that you will not be surprised at certain events which may take place in the future."

"To what do you refer? To your joining the army? I suppose the leader is an attraction just now. I hear Miss Dwight has been sent up to take charge."

It was as cruel and harmful a fling as Louise could be guilty of. But she was stung into bitterness by many events of the past few days, and her selfish, narrow nature had more than once delighted to make Stuart suffer.

Stuart was pale to his lips. His Christian experience, his "conversion," as he could call it, was not more sacred to his thoughts than the memory of the army leader and the thought of her sacrifice and surrender of all that most young women count dear.

"Louise!" he cried, and if he had not been in the grasp of a better strength, here he would have been swept into one of his old-time bursts of passion,—
"Louise! You do not know what you wound. You must not harm my conception of Christ, or cast any dishonor on his work in my forgiven soul! You have no right!"

He spoke so sternly, and yet with so much evident right defense of his inner motives, that Louise was frightened. She might perhaps have asked Stuart's pardon; but he, fearing to prolong the conversation, went out of the room and in to see Eric. Louise, after standing idly by the piano a few minutes, at last went upstairs to her own room.

Stuart sat down by Eric, and asked the nurse to leave them alone a little while. He was suffering from his interview with Louise, but he wanted to tell Eric

his experience. It seemed to him necessary before he went on with his life another day.

In a few sentences he told Eric his experience of the morning. Eric listened in wonder. He was very weak. He grasped Stuart's hand and pressed it feebly when he paused in his narrative.

"I never had any such 'leading', as our men call it. I joined the army because I believed it was the only kind of Christianity that can really help things much."

"But how is it Eric? Do you feel a personal relationship to Christ as a Saviour?"

"Yes, I think I do. But it is not so plain to me as I would like."

"That is the most astonishing thing to me," replied Stuart thoughtfully. "You know I never had any idea of ever talking about salvation or a Saviour. You don't remember, do you, that we ever talked on this subject before?"

Eric shook his head.

"And yet, now," continued Stuart reverently, "I seem to feel as I never felt or expected to feel less than a day ago. I can't explain it, Eric, but Christ seems the most real of all realities in my life. I can put it in this way: henceforth I do not feel able or willing to do anything without first asking, 'Would Christ approve this?' Would he say, 'Do it?'"

"Does that apply to your use of property and money and the present mine troubles?" asked Eric bluntly.

"Yes." The answer came with a positive conviction that thrilled the pale face on the pillow. "Yes! My whole life is changed. All my relations to my fellow men, all my possessions and their use, all that belongs

to my powers of any kind, seem under the law of this new indwelling. Eric, do you believe in the fact of God actually dwelling in man?"

Eric did not reply at once. There was a thoughtful silence.

"Yes, I believe it. I don't see it very plain. But if you feel as you say you do, it will change matters in the relations you bear to the men and all around."

"Of course. I don't see details yet, but I feel willing to walk where the light shines. Eric, old friend, life even under our present troublous conditions seems like a very great, grand thing to me now."

"I am glad for you," replied Eric simply.

Stuart saw that he was not able to endure much, and he called the nurse back soon after that and went out. But that brief communion did the two men much good.

It was now, nearly three o'clock. Word came up to Stuart that the men who had been persuaded to leave had gone back on the first train east. There had been a great demonstration and then the miners had disappeared, many of them going on down to the lower range to help the men there in their dealings with the remaining strangers.

Matters were quiet in Champion as the day wore on, and there was no news of an exciting character from below. The owners there had not tried to set the new men to work, but were evidently waiting for a large addition of the force to come in from the south and west. These would not pass through Champion.

Affairs were in this waiting condition the next day at noon when Stuart's Aunt Royal came.

She was a large, showy woman, a slave to society, and a thorough woman of the world; a born diplomat and financier. She had very determined views of life, and among them was the conviction that one might as well be dead as out of the fashion or out of society. She spoke of the people who were not in society as "the masses," the "common people, you know," whenever she mentioned them at all. She had inherited a large amount of money, a great deal of which was invested in tenement and saloon property in New York. This is a very plain and perhaps shocking revelation of Aunt Royal's main means of support, but it is a historical fact and goes with a biography of her person. Besides, who does own most of the saloon and tenement property of New York and get the rentals from it? To sum up briefly, Aunt Royal was very much like her brother, the late Ross Duncan, with the exception of his gruff and hard manner of speech. Aunt Royal spoke very sweetly and gently always. A French revolution in New York would not have provoked a rough or elevated tone of voice from Aunt Royal. She had little education, as her father had been a market gardener in one of the city suburbs. It was there he had begun to make his money. And Aunt Royal as a girl had helped him, more than once driving a wagon load of vegetables and fruits into the city. She never spoke of that now.

The first word Louise said was, "Aunt, you have come to stay all winter, I hope?"

"I think so. Yes, I would be glad to escape from the whirl this winter for a change."

"We're having a little 'whirl' up here, madam," remarked the doctor, who had come up to see Eric that

afternoon and was standing in the hall where Louise greeted her aunt.

"Ah, Dr. Saxon!" said Aunt Royal. "I am delighted to see you again." In reality she hated the doctor vigorously, and the doctor returned her feeling with interest. "You are having trouble up here, you mean? I suppose it will soon be quiet. These people will soon be driven to work again. They never make anything by these uprisings."

"No, ma'am, only work for the doctors," replied Saxon. He went into Eric's room and Aunt Royal and Louise went upstairs.

"So you have one of these people in the house? Don't you consider that rather dangerous?" Aunt Royal said in her sweet, clear voice as she was going up the broad staircase with her niece.

Eric from where he lay heard every syllable distinctly. He had met Aunt Royal once, and the meeting was not a pleasant memory. He had never been able to keep from choking when he thought of the condescending air with which this woman had expressed herself to him on the occasion of his saving Stuart's life. It was very much as if he had been a Newfoundland dog and she had patted him on the head for pulling Stuart out of the water by the teeth.

"When do you think I can get out of here, doctor?" he asked almost roughly.

"Not for a week anyway. You're getting on well. Don't mind her. I'd hate to have the job of being her family physician. I don't believe she has any real heart. It's a piece of leather with valves, warranted to let just so much blood through, and only so much, every beat.

She hasn't any more real circulating system than a frog."

Eric stared at the doctor. He had never heard the doctor at his very gruffest say anything so harsh. The doctor seemed ashamed immediately and tried to apologize by saying:—

"I ought not to have said that, but I feel better for it."

Two days went by, and still the situation between the mine owners and the strikers remained nearly the same. The owners at the lower range had not yet succeeded in getting enough men in to go to work. Several of them who had gone on from Champion had been persuaded to leave. The troops were still at De Mott, and the speeches of the miners in their daily meetings at the park were growing more bitter against them. The wounded officer at the hotel was recovering. His friends had come up to take care of him, and the doctor thought he could go home at the end of the week. Andrew Burke had proved a delightful companion to the officer. He had moved some of his choicest roses down into the room and had himself proved the truth of the proverb, "A merry heart doeth good like medicine."

It was Friday night that the Vasplaines had invited Aunt Royal, Louise and Stuart to a quiet dinner at their house. Stuart did not want to go. He knew what the company would be, and he had no liking for the young Vasplaine, who for a year or two now was evidently trying to win the favor of Louise. Stuart, even before the experience which made life a new thing for him, never had any fellowship except that of an acquaintance with Vasplaine, and he knew enough about him to dis-

like his immoral character and his general make-up as a man.

The family was exceedingly wealthy, and next to the Duncans', their house was the finest in Champion. It was built at the other end of the valley towards the park. The elder Vasplaine had retired some years before. His brother and his son carried on certain lumber and copper industries north of Champion. They were not directly interested in the iron mines, except as they were involved in the general condition of business, all of which, of course, felt the effect of the strike. There was also in the family a daughter, Miss Una Vasplaine, a young woman about Louise's age. The girls had been playmates together.

Stuart was sitting by Miss Vasplaine at this dinner, and the conversation was general, all about him. He was just replying to a question put by his companion, and she had rallied him on his serious appearance. Miss Una was vivacious, a striking looking girl, and Stuart in the old days had always found her an agreeable talker. He smiled in reply to her question, and was on the point of answering, when the whole company received a shock that set the ladies screaming and the gentlemen starting to their feet in alarm.

The large dining room fronted on the veranda, and a magnificent plate-glass window extended from the floor almost to the ceiling, looking out on the pine-tree lawn. The night was clear and frosty. It was growing late in the season, and winter would soon set in; the ground was bare now and dry. The moon was just coming up over the Davis hill range.

Suddenly through this window a chunk of iron ore

came crashing right over the table. It scattered the glass in every direction, crashed through the pendants of the electric chandelier, and smashed into the mirror over the sideboard, knocking it into splinters, and then, falling down on the sideboard itself, broke the glass-ware and dishes right and left.

The affair was so unexpected, it came so without warning, that the company was terrified and altogether shocked. Aunt Royal was the first to speak.

"That's the work of some of your precious strikers."

"I don't believe it!" Stuart shouted. In his heart he cursed the saloon and all its great wickedness. He believed the hand that flung the ore was rum-crazed.

The men all rushed out on the veranda, and the elder Vasplaine, thoroughly incensed at the outrage, ordered his horses out, and as soon as they were ready he and his brother started off down the road in pursuit. Word was sent to the police force in Champion of the affair. Stuart remained with the ladies for a while, and then, as young Vasplaine volunteered to escort them home, he hurried down into the town to investigate the matter. He did not believe any of the miners would do such a thing. They had done enough that had prejudiced the owners against them, but only when under the influence of drink. Besides, Vasplaine was not an owner now, although he had been years before.

Stuart found everything quiet in the town. Most of the miners were still in De Mott. It was murmured that a large load of men was coming in that night. He remained at the office a little while and then started out for home.

As he came out on the street he saw the Salvation Army. It was kneeling at the corner for its outdoor meeting, just before going to its hall to hold its regular service. Rhena Dwight was kneeling right on the hard stones of the pavement offering a prayer. Stuart could not hear the words, but he could see the pale, earnest face. He hesitated where he was. He thought he would go on home. Then he thought he would go into the hall and see what kind of a meeting the army had. At last, as the army rose and went by up the street beating its drum, he turned slowly and walked in the same direction. Just as he entered the hall he might have heard, if he had not been too absorbed in where he was going, a sound borne over the frosty ground and through the clear mountain air from the direction of De Mott. It was the sound of thousands of feet striking the earth and coming towards Champion.

CHAPTER VI.

A MEMORABLE NIGHT.

THE Salvation Army Hall was an old storage room which had once been used for miners' supplies. It seated about four hundred people. There was very little furniture in it except the wooden chairs, and two box stoves, one at either end. A flag was draped across one corner. There was a platform about two feet above the floor where the army was taking up its position for the meeting as Stuart entered.

Although many of the miners had gone over to De Mott that day in anticipation of the excitement when the new men came in, there was still a large number of men in Champion. The hall was crowded. Not a place was left for standing room except at the rear near the door and the aisle which by common practice was left open for converts to march down and kneel at the altar. The man with the big drum was stationed out at the end of the platform and had difficulty to find room enough to swing his arm as hard as he wanted to, and once during the evening as he flung his drum-stick back to bang his instrument on a hallelujah chorus, he struck one of the interested spectators, who was leaning eagerly forward, a good, smart blow on the nose. This incident created a little confusion, but it was soon quieted.

Stuart was intensely interested in the meeting as it

progressed. He was familiar with the outdoor meetings, and he had seen the army in its great gatherings in London, but he was in a condition himself at this particular time, in his own personal history and experience, to feel a peculiar and special interest in this particular meeting.

He was sitting about six rows from the front and next to the aisle, where he could see everything distinctly. The audience was mostly men, though several of the miners' wives and some of the younger women were scattered about in the crowd. The service started with a vigorous solo and chorus. The major, a large, fine-faced Englishman, with a voice that shook the windows, started in with the song,

"I was a deep-dyed sinner,
Just as deep as I could be,"

and the army came in with a rattling chorus to the Bowery tune of "Swim out, O Grady!" The verse and chorus ran like this:—

"I was a deep-dyed sinner,
Just as deep as I could be;
But, praise God for salvation,
To-day I know I'm free!
I have God's smile upon me now,
Of hell I have no fears;
When the devil comes and tempts me
Why, I whisper in his ears:

CHORUS.

"Get out, Mephisto!
I have no use for you;
I'm a soldier in the Army,
And to Jesus I'll be true;
I'm fighting 'neath the colors,
The yellow, red, and blue.
Get out, old devil, get out!"

There were five verses, the last one concluding the second or final chorus as follows:—

“A word about the collection,
For we want a good one, sure;
The devil often tells me
That to give I am too poor;
Which makes me go down deeper
When the timbrel comes my way,
And my action brings a blessing sure,
And helps me when I say:

SECOND CHORUS.

“Get out, old devil!
I’ve lost my love for you;
I’m a soldier in the Army,
And to Jesus I’ll be true;
I’m fighting ’neath the colors,
The yellow, red, and blue.
Get out, old devil, get out!”

It would be impossible to describe the effect of this song on the audience. The Cornish people were great lovers of music. Before the stalwart soloist had finished two verses of the song, nearly every foot in the audience, and there was not a light foot in it, was beating time on the hard board floor, and at the conclusion of the third verse nearly every person in the hall was roaring out the words of the chorus with the army, although they had not been invited to sing on this particular selection.

The army did not seem in the least disturbed however. It would take more than a slight incident like that to disturb the Salvation Army of Champion. At the conclusion of song everybody on the platform kneeled down.

Rhena Dwight was in the center of the little group. The audience was as quiet now as it had been noisy before. There was a smoky kerosene lamp just over her head, and as she kneeled there in the midst of those

rough surroundings Stuart could not crowd back the thought of what this girl had been and what she was now. The refinement of her face was remarkable. It had seen a great trouble, but withal it was a face that had seen a great victory. She prayed very much as she had the first time Stuart heard her. The army broke in frequently with "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" but not noisily or in a way really to interrupt. Stuart glanced through the crowd, and saw here and there tears running over rough cheeks of men and women. Then he bowed his own head, and when the prayer was finished and he lifted up his face again, something like tears wet his own eyelashes.

Immediately after Rhena's prayer, half a dozen short prayers were offered by different members of the army. Then they rose to their feet again and one of the Hallelujah lasses came forward to the front of the platform and sang with a tambourine accompaniment, while two other members went down into the aisle with their instruments, which they passed around as collection boxes. A meager contribution of pennies rattled on the parchment covers of the tambourines while the song and chorus rose loud and determined:—

"Oh! I'm glad I am converted
In the Army of the Lord;
Oh! I'm glad I am converted
In the Army.

CHORUS.

"Reign, oh, reign! my Saviour!
Reign, oh, reign! my Lord!
Send the sanctifying power,
In the Army of the Lord,
Send the sanctifying power,
In the Army.

"He will give you grace to conquer
In the Army of the Lord;
He will give you grace to conquer
In the Army.

"He will fill you with his spirit
In the Army of the Lord:
He will fill you with his spirit
In the Army.

"Oh! I feel the power is coming
In the Army of the Lord:
In the Army."

It was at the close of the collection that Rhena spoke. As long as he lives Stuart will never forget the feeling with which he listened, nor the impression made upon the rough, uncultured audience. Where had this young woman, reared in the hothouse atmosphere of society, trained to its artificial politeness and refinement, caught the spirit which knows how to speak to the people of the street and the mine and the coarse toil of humble homes? Certain it was she had caught it, and the old storage room, with its audience of stolid, hardened, rough men and women, was the scene of a strange victory of spirit over spirit. Rhena's voice was a wonderful help. It was very clear and strong for such a little body. It penetrated into the souls of the people. But it was what she said that held them bound like captives to her will. She spoke simply, lovingly, with true enthusiasm of the great love of God in sending his Son into the world. It was not preaching, it was a message of one saved soul to others who were still in peril. She spoke only a few minutes, and as she closed she asked those who were under conviction to come forward and kneel by the platform.

At once an old man stumbled out into the aisle. He was partly under the influence of liquor, and if it had not been for the friendly pushes of the people on either side of the aisle, as he tumbled up first against one, then against another, it is doubtful if he would have succeeded in getting as far as the platform. He did reach it, however, and kneeled down after a fashion, resting his head and arms on the platform at Rhena's feet. Instantly, in a voice that thrilled every ear in the room, Rhena started the song:—

“Return, O wanderer! return,
And seek your father's face:
Those new desires that in you burn
Were kindled by his grace.

“Return, O wanderer! return;
He hears your humble sigh:
He sees your softened spirit mourn,
When no one else is nigh.

“Return, O wanderer! return;
Your Saviour bids you live;
Come to His Cross and you will learn
How freely He'll forgive.”

Each time the army came in with the chorus:—

“Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord,
Or you can't go to heaven when you die.”

The contrast between the absolutely cultivated tone of the song in the verses and the noisy, drum-accompanied rattle of the chorus was startling to Stuart. He winced at it every time. Rhena did not seem in the least disturbed. She smiled at the enthusiastic swing of the arm that beat the big drum and nodded her head in time to the rush of the chorus as it was also caught up by the audience.

Several persons went forward and knelt during this song. At its conclusion the major, who seemed in command this evening, called for testimonies. They came, brief and simple, from nearly every member of the army on the platform, and were listened to in perfect silence, which was sometimes followed by a clapping of hands in the audience or by the rest of the army. The testimonies generally consisted of a brief statement, something like this: "Two months ago I found Jesus right here in this room, praise be his name! he is very precious to my soul."

"The Lord spoke to me from the cross just three weeks ago to-night and I gave him my heart, hallelujah!"

"I was a drunken, worthless sinner a year ago; now I am redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and I am not ashamed to testify of his salvation."

"Before I was converted and joined the army I was known as 'Scaly Joe, the whisky soak.' Now I'm a new man; haven't had a nip for mor'n a month, and my name is Joseph now, and don't you forget it! Amen!"

One of the late converts among the women came forward and in a trembling voice, with tears running down her cheeks, she said, while the laughter raised by "Scaly Joe's" testimony suddenly ceased:—

"I was an outcast on God's earth only a short time ago. The army found me and told me of the love of Jesus. I'm redeemed and my sins all washed away in the precious blood, glory be to his name!"

Now to Stuart, as he sat there listening to all this, a great torrent of feeling came. It rose in him like a swelling tide and he did not try to repress it. There was something very wonderful to him in the rude,

rough, simple manner in which these men and women of the common people spoke of sins forgiven and a personal Saviour. It all coincided with his own experience of only a few days before. It was the last thing in the world he had expected to do when he came into the hall, but now it seemed the most natural and necessary thing, and acting under what he believed to be a leading of the divine impulse he rose, and with all the people in the audience and on the platform looking at him, and in the midst of silence that was painful, he said: "My friends, I want to say with these other saved souls that I have also lately felt God's hand, and acknowledge Jesus Christ to be my personal Saviour, and by his help I mean to live as becomes his disciple."

It was a very simple, unaffected statement, entirely free from anything like cant or parade of one's conversion. But it produced a very marked effect upon every one in the hall. Rhena Dwight flushed, then paled again, and her lips parted as if she were offering a prayer. The members of the army remained motionless. The old miners who had known him as a boy stared at Stuart as if he were another person, as indeed he was now.

He was still standing where he had risen and all eyes were upon him, when through the silence of the room came the sound of a host of marching feet. It was a measured, heavy sound, and instantly every man in the room had risen. Some one near the door shouted into the room, "There's been a fight down at De Mott! They's bringing soldiers up here."

The next instant every man in the room was struggling for the door. Stuart was near the platform, and

it seemed like the most natural thing in the world that in the confusion that attended the sudden and uncere-
monious exit of the audience he should be talking with Rhena Dwight.

And in the midst of all the noise of overturning chairs and the growing tumult just outside the door of the hall Stuart told her his experience of the morning, when he had for the first time felt the personal touch of the divine power and heard the call to his soul, "Follow me," as the living and risen Christ had spoken to him. Somehow it seemed altogether the most natural thing in the world that this part of his inner life should become known to this slight, earnest-faced figure in the Salvation costume. Rhena clasped her hands together and her eyes glistened with tears.

"Thank you, Mr. Duncan, for telling me," she said simply.

It all took a few minutes only, and Stuart, after speaking to some of the other members of the army and receiving a hearty "God bless you sir," from all of them, started to go out. When half-way down the aisle he turned and went hurriedly back and said:—

"Miss Dwight, I hope you will not risk your life in the crowd to-night. I don't know what the men are going to do, but you have dared enough already. I beg you will not venture among the miners to-night."

He did not wait to hear her reply. She looked surprised, and as he went out he wondered if he had spoken more like commanding than beseeching. But once out in the street he was absorbed in the sight that met him in the square which had lately been the scene of so much excitement.

As the facts grew upon him Stuart asked himself if the events of the strike were about to come to a climax with a tragedy that night. During the evening, while he had been at the Vasplaines' and in the Salvation Army Hall, the miners at De Mott had come in conflict with the troops, and in the fight that took place the troops had fired, killing two of the men and wounding several others. Before another volley was fired, however, the miners had fairly swarmed over the handful of troops, disarmed them, and after a brief but fiery debate they had resolved on a vengeance that to the mind of the North men was in keeping with the occasion. They had secured the officers and men of the two troops and, placing them in the center of the crowd, marched them over the range to Champion, there determined to give them a short trial by the public mob and then shoot the officers. They had marched over to Champion because the two miners who had been killed had lived there. The bodies were brought over with the crowd, carried into the square, and placed at the foot of the band stand. The captured men and officers were massed directly in front of the dead bodies. The great crowd of miners filled the entire space outside and around the stand.

All this Stuart learned as he came out into the street. He was sick at heart as the truth grew on him. Never in all his life had he seen the Cornish men, the Danes, the few Italians, the Norwegians, all so united and so possessed with the one thought of vengeance. The moon was fully up now and it flooded the square with its mellow light. It was frosty and not a breath of air was stirring. Never had Stuart imagined such a scene possible in the town of Champion. A dozen men had gone

up in the band stand. The tragedy was about to begin by the public trial of the troops, to be followed by the predetermined shooting of at least half a dozen of them.

For a moment Stuart remained motionless, smitten with dumb hopelessness. The whole town was in the grasp of the mob. The handful of police was powerless. What could possibly resist the torrent that was about to be let loose, and where would it end? There was no hope of assistance from other troops nearer than Hancock, a hundred miles away. Before they could arrive the tragedy would be acted out. Stuart groaned as he thought of Eric and his influence. Nevertheless he had himself just begun to spring into the crowd and raise his voice alone against the impending horror, when some one pulled him over backward, nearly throwing him off his feet, and the voice of Dr. Saxon said:—

“Two of the biggest fools on earth are out here to-night, and if you will be another we’ll make a combination hard to beat!”

“What! How’s that?” cried Stuart in amazement. And his surprise was doubled when the doctor, who had reached out from his buggy and caught Stuart, threw back the robe and disclosed Eric’s deathly face as he reclined on the seat beside him.

“Eric! You here!” Stuart was like one seeing things in a dream.

“Quick! If anything is going to be done, do it with a streak of lightning under it to help it along!” cried the doctor. He spoke to Stuart rapidly: “I was at De Mott to-night when the trouble occurred. I drove back here and came around by the Beury road past the house. I stopped a minute to see Eric, and when I told him the

men were marching into Champion with the troops he swore by all his old Anglo-Saxon gods that he must come down here and talk to the men. And here he is. It'll probably end him up, but he said if I didn't bring him down with me he'd get up and try to walk it anyway. If he dies, it's suicide and not a case of malpractice; but he may pull through all right, for it beats the Dutch what a lot of doctoring it takes to kill off one of these labor agitators. Here! Help him out, Stuart. Confound him, if he doesn't want to get up there in the midst of the high priests of this strike till the last armed foe expires! Gently now! I'll wager two dollars a day he'll faint away before he can open his mouth to say his little oration!"

All this from the doctor as with the utmost skill and tenderness he assisted Stuart to lift Eric out of the buggy, and then helped bear him right into the crowd, where Eric, who was suffering the most awful pain, motioned the two to carry him.

After all, it was not surprising that Eric was here this night. Stuart realized what it might mean as he shouted to the miners around him to make room for Eric.

The men exclaimed at sight of these two men carrying the fainting form of their young leader, and they fell back, opening a path for their passage up to the band stand. When they reached that, Eric cried in a voice that gave Stuart more hope than he had yet dared to feel, "Right up the stairs! Quick! I'm able to speak to the men. Please God, they shall not do this great wrong to-night."

Some of the men in the stand came part way down

the rude steps and helped Stuart and the doctor. After all, they did not know Eric's motive in coming out this way. And they were under his influence still, and probably had no thought of resisting any attempt he might make to address the crowd.

So Eric was carried up, and the doctor and Stuart brought him forward and partly held him on his feet, looking out over a scene that became a part of the life memory of them all.

The moon was at the full, and there was no need of torches or lamps. The two dead men had been placed upon a rude platform of boards at the foot of the band stand and elevated so that their forms were visible to the miners, even those who were at a distance. Their faces, uncovered, stared straight upward in the cold midnight. The captured soldiers were ranged directly in front of the bodies, and the force of the great mob, indeed, crowded them up to the very edge of the ghastly platform so that some of them stood touching it. The square itself all about the soldiers was black with the mob. All the faces were set and stern. All were lifted towards the stand as Eric stood there confronting them.

He is a great man who knows the way to the heart of a mob. Probably there was not a soul in all Champion that night who knew how to place his hands on the strings of emotion and impulse as Eric Vassall knew, when it was a question of dealing with the men whom he loved and in whose cause he had voluntarily given up all ambitions that most men allow to grow when they are conscious of their ability to rise above their fellows. Eric assumed the right to speak at this crisis as the right of one who sacrificed more than any man present for

the sacred cause of labor. And no man in the stand dared to deny him that privilege or interrupt his purpose.

What do men say on such occasions? It is doubtful if Stuart or the doctor, who heard every word, could have told afterward what Eric said. Every word burned like fire in the air, but it did not belong to the catalogue of speeches easily repeated. The doctor was amazed at the power of Eric's voice. It rang out like a trumpet, and reached the farthest point. It meant, of course, that the collapse would come after the strain, and Saxon watched him narrowly to see the first sign of it. The main current of Eric's appeal flowed through the one channel of preserving unstained the sacred cause for which the men had sacrificed all they had and were. The pleasure of tasting vengeance would last but a little while. The cause of labor would be killed, so far as they were concerned, once and for all, if law was broken or vengeance taken this night. He appealed to the religious element, which he knew was strong in hundreds of the men before him. He reminded them of the prayers that had been offered from the very place where he now stood. How could a just God or a merciful Saviour look with anything but horror upon men who had vowed to love and obey him, plunging into such a crime? And, oh, for the cause they represented! Was it not dearer to them than the killing of a few men in revenge? Would that bring to life again their brothers? Who was there who did not feel for the wrongs and injustices of the workingmen if he did not? Yet in his vision of events he clearly saw that never in his lifetime, or that of their children's children, would they lessen those

wrongs or obtain just rights as men, if by an act of passion they broke the already too slender bond of sympathy that united the great public with them now.

Eric had never put so much of himself into an appeal before. It had never cost so much. It would be a wonderful triumph for him if he could prevail tonight. And he believed he could see signs of a yielding on the part of the men. If only he could hold out a little longer! He reeled in the arms of Stuart and the doctor. All his senses throbbed with agony. The panorama of the square floated before him in a mist of moonlight, and the dull murmur of the mob broke on his ears like a far-off surf on an ocean coast. He felt his voice failing him, his tongue seemed like ashes in his mouth, and still it seemed to him he must go on.

It was now, as Eric began to feel earth and heaven slipping away from him before he had completed his heart's desire, or before his words had wrought their work in the men's minds or acted on conscience and reason, although they had listened in a wonderful silence,—it was now that a voice rose from the steps of the Salvation Army Hall, which was close by the railway depot and, indeed, made one corner of the square of Champion. It was the voice of Rhena Dwight, and she was not speaking but singing.

We have said that the Cornish man is a great lover of music and very susceptible to its influence. Rhena had found that out from her contact with the miners and their families since coming to Champion. It was not a remarkable thing, therefore, that as she stood and listened to Eric that night she was led to use the gift which God had given her. More than once she had seen

angry passions calmed and brute impulses shamed at the sound of her voice, and as Eric began to faint away, Rhena, moved by one of those true inspirations of life which would God more of us might follow, broke into a song which swept like an angel's over that hushed and wondering audience. The clear, frosty air bore every word and note to the ear of the thousands of men who stood packed into the square. The distance was not very great, and the voice was cultivated, the enunciation distinct and exact. But the pathos, the entreaty, the warning, how did Rhena sing all that except by the help of the divine Power who takes and uses poor, weak human powers to his glory when they submit themselves to his will in the consecration of his gifts? She sang while the mob listened:—

“It's true there's a beautiful city,
That its street are paved with gold;
No earthly tongue can describe it;
Its glories can never be told.
But I know, I know!
I know I shall be there.

“Your loved ones dwell in that city,
Whom you placed beneath the sod,
When your heart felt nigh to breaking
And you promised you'd serve your God,
Will you? will you?
Say, will you meet me there?

“There none but the pure and the holy
Can ever enter in;
You have no hope of its glory
If still you're the servant of sin.
Bless God! bless God!
Bless God, you may be there!

“Yes, you can go there, my brother,
For Jesus has died on the tree;
And that same precious blood is flowing

That washed a poor sinner like me.

Will you? will you?

Will you now wash and be clean?

"All who enter that glorious city

Have made their garments of white,

Have trod in the Saviour's footsteps;

They've battled for God and for right.

I long, I long!

I long to meet you there."

Had ever singer such an audience, such an occasion, or such a purpose in using the divine passion of song? Long before she had finished, Eric had fainted dead away, and Stuart and the doctor were caring for him as he lay on the floor of the band stand, his upturned face as ghastly white as those two below. But Stuart's senses throbbed to that song as they never had to any triumphant aria that ever swept through the gilded, perfumed opera houses of Europe. What were all those singers there to this one who was using her gift to help save life and prevent crime? It is probable that Stuart Duncan laid his heart at the feet of Rhena Dwight that evening. He had already surrendered his soul to God. It was no less a sacred mingling of that with all the rest of his recent experience that he lifted up his heart to the height of loving this woman.

The song ceased. The men breathed deeper, as if they had been holding their breath during the singing, and a murmur swelled over the square. It grew every second, but the mob was not the same. The better purposes in hundreds of the men had been stirred. They were not brutal or cruel or lawless men, for the most part, but, on the contrary, very many of them were deeply religious, and above all else they desired to see the cause of labor triumph. The facts so clearly pre-

sented by Eric were undeniable. One of the older men began to speak now from the stand. They had come up to Champion to take the law into their own hands. The question was, in the light of sober reason, what would the results be if they should do this thing in hot blood? Eric was right about it. There arose a storm of cries from the crowd at this point for a division on the question. "What did the Union decide? Bide by the Union in the matter! Ay, ay, that's reason! Vote! Decision!"

The vote was accordingly taken. Should the soldiers and officers be dealt with by the miners for the death of the two men, or should they be handed over to the authorities to await due process of law? The vote was taken by hands. Less than a fourth of the men thrust up their hands, with clubs in them, on the vote to deal with the soldiers as they pleased. On the negative an overwhelming majority carried the day to submit the entire affair to the law.

Instantly every man in the band stand came down. Stuart and the doctor assisted in bearing Eric back to the doctor's buggy. Eric revived a little as he was being carried, and asked to be taken to his own house. The doctor thought that would be wiser than to take him back to Stuart's, and Stuart reluctantly consented to the transfer. He went himself with Eric, saw him comfortable, and then returned to the square.

The decision of the Union was being faithfully carried out. The troops and their officers were placed under guard in the engine house, and the police of Champion were assisted by the miners, who claimed that the firing of the troops had been without excuse and that

the placing of them under arrest was called for by every dictate of justice and fair play.

As we pass this incident in the course of this narrative which is connected with the story of our lives in Champion, it is sufficient to say that next day the troops were taken back to De Mott by the authorities, and in the trial which came off afterwards the case was dismissed on the ground of insufficient evidence to convict. As a matter of fact, there had been great provocation on both sides, but the firing of the troops was always considered by the miners as not warranted by the facts.

They always spoke of the killing of the two men as "murder," and looked upon the acquittal of the officer who gave the command to fire as an outrage and a clear miscarriage of justice.

So ended that memorable night. Stuart went home at last, feeling that the problem was no nearer solution, so far as the strike was concerned, and agitated as never before by the great rising within him of emotions and thoughts heretofore entirely unknown to him. The sight of the conflict these men were making for a few cents more a day for labor, which meant the risk of life every twenty-four hours, was a sight that grew more and more significant to him as he watched the struggle unfold. He could not see the end. He dared not anticipate the final result.

As the days went by, the situation remained practically the same. The effect of sending troops down the range had so far shown the mine owners that they had really a very ugly chance to take in forcing new labor into the mines. The few men who had gone on from Champion to De Mott had gradually been persuaded to

go back, or they drifted away in search of work elsewhere, as the owners put off getting more men. In reality the owners dreaded more than anything else the flooding and ruining of the mines in case the attempt to put new men in was successful. Besides all this, the price of ore was rapidly rising, and many of the owners had great quantities of ore in the stock piles, and it was believed by many that there was no great desire on the part of the owners to start in again so long as such large quantities of ore were already at the top. It was thought that, even if the strike continued until spring, the owners would be able to realize large profits on lapsed contracts, and on this account would really be the gainers by not operating the mines. Meanwhile winter was fast coming on and the miners were finding it more and more difficult to get credit at the stores. Many of the merchants refused to trust the men any longer. There was a prospect of some ugly scenes of suffering in Champion, unless matters changed decidedly in a fortnight.

It was at this time that Stuart first really thought of his great wealth with reference to its use in improving the condition of affairs in Champion. He had gone down to see Eric, who was able to be about the house now, and while there Andrew had come in. The three had drifted into a discussion of ways and means to relieve the distress that was apparent already among the families of the miners.

"I cannot help feeling that this strike is all wrong, Eric," said Stuart, continuing the conversation as it had started from the standpoint of the miners. "I am in receipt of letters every day from my agents in Cleveland,

beseeking me to come in with the other owners on their refusal to grant the men their demand of two dollars a day. They say in every letter they do not see, in case of a break in the Union, how I am going to manage affairs if the men hold me to my original decision of giving two dollars a day."

"What will you do?" asked Eric.

"Time enough when that time comes. Does the Union show signs of weakening?"

"Not yet. But there is no telling." Eric sighed. "I am changing my opinion of the strike and all. Somehow I have seen a different vision of the future since my injury and especially since the night in the square."

"Do you mean that you are more hopeful or less so over the final result?" asked Andrew.

Eric was silent and very thoughtful before he replied.

"I don't expect to see it in my lifetime; I mean the triumph of right and brotherhood; and I will tell you why. The love of money is as old as civilization. I do not know of a stronger or more enduring passion. It reaches down into the very basis of all human struggle and is the mainspring of every civilized man's life. Why, even the church is honeycombed with the love of money! And the more I study the problem the more I believe that nothing short of a very convulsion of nature will ever tear away the clinging, grasping hand of civilization on its eternal clutch of gold, the love of wealth, the cause of all the selfishness of the modern world as we know it."

"There is no question about money being at the bottom of most of the world's selfishness," replied Andrew. "But its use has sometimes proved a blessing. I very

often think I could be a better man if I could pay off all my debts and buy all the roses I want."

"Yes, you would then get to be as selfish as the rest of us," smiled Stuart. He came back to the topic first started. "How can we do anything in the present emergency? Here is a practical condition. I don't know as it helps very much to discuss how the men got into it; I understand that women and children are beginning to suffer. I don't know as we need to push our investigations into causes further than that."

"Well, you've got plenty of money," broke in Eric bluntly.

"So I have!" Stuart spoke quietly, but almost as if for the first time a consciousness of his great power had flashed across his mind. The other two men watched him curiously; Eric from the standpoint of the working-man, Andrew from the point of view of the church.

"I'm ready to consecrate every cent I possess to the good of humanity!" cried Stuart with enthusiasm.

"And I want you two men to show me how to do it wisely."

Eric rose and shuffled towards the window. Then he came back to where he had been sitting and remarked, "You must be converted sure if it's gone in as deep as all that!"

Andrew looked over at Stuart and said smilingly, "If you mean all that, we need time to think it over and formulate wise plans."

Stuart rose and paced the little room. "I mean every word. When I became a Christian, I said in my heart, 'I will dedicate all I have and all I am to the cause of my Saviour.' I understand fully all that means. I do not

believe a man can be a Christian at all and make money his great object in life, or regard money in any way except as a steward or trustee to use all that has honestly come into his hands as God would have him use it. I don't know just the exact amount of money I have at my disposal," he added simply. "Can't we three get together and arrange some kind of a three-cornered, three-sided society that shall have for its object the discussion of ways and means, and the questions of men in relation to others in society? How does that idea strike you two?"

So for the first time Stuart suggested the plan which he afterwards elaborated. The three men agreed to meet the next day with Andrew and make a definite and practical organization. Eric was now able to get out again, although he was far from strong and had the prospect of a lame shoulder for an indefinite time.

At home that afternoon Louise and her Aunt Royal were discussing a proposed party to be given for the Vasplaines and three or four other families. Not anything elaborate. Just a quiet affair; it was too near the time of her brother's death to entertain any great party. Aunt Royal was very particular about observing society etiquette, especially when the observance did not interfere with her selfishness. When it did, she found that the rules of polite society allowed her to have about what she wanted if she gave it the right name. So she and Louise had planned a quiet "affair," not a "reception" or a "party," at which they had decided to invite about twenty-five or thirty persons representing the old and aristocratic families of Champion.

"Aunt," said Louise after they had discussed what

they would have to wear and to eat; "what do you think of inviting Rhena Dwight?"

"What!" exclaimed Aunt Royal. "The leader of the Salvation Army? What are you thinking of, child?"

"She is a beautiful singer," replied Louise. She seemed to be thinking hard of something.

"Do you mean to invite her in a professional capacity to help entertain the company?" asked Aunt Royal.

"She wouldn't come in that capacity," replied Louise with a dry laugh.

"What makes you think of inviting her then?" asked Aunt Royal with a searching look.

"Oh, never mind. I had an idea," replied Louise.

Later in the afternoon she went out, walking down into the town, as she frequently did in winter. She loved the exercise, and finding that it helped to keep her well and good looking she persevered in it, even in stormy weather.

Rhena Dwight lodged with an elderly widow who kept two or three other boarders in a house just below the Army Hall. Louise, after walking around the square, went down past the Hall and knocked at this lodging house. Rhena was in, and Louise was directed to her room. She knocked, and Rhena herself opened the door. She did not know Louise at first, as the light in the passageway was dim. When she did fully recognize the face and figure with its rich setting of costly furs, she at first colored slightly. Then she asked her to come in. Louise entered and Rhena closed the door after her. Outside the snow was beginning to fall very fast, and the short winter day was deepening its twilight about the town of Champion.

CHAPTER VII.

PLANS GOOD AND BAD,

YOU are surprised to see me, Miss Dwight," said Louise, taking the seat Rhena had placed for her. "I am Miss Duncan, Stuart Duncan's sister."

"Yes, I know you are. I have seen you walk past the hall several times," said Rhena quietly. She had not the remotest idea of the purpose of Louise's call.

"We are going to have a little company at the house next week, and we would be glad to have you come," said Louise boldly, looking straight at Rhena. "I thought it would be less formal to call and invite you personally than to send a note."

Rhena looked over at her caller in the utmost astonishment. She did not know Louise at all. She had never met her in society in the old days before leaving everything for the army, and she thought Louise, knowing her history, might suppose she would possibly enjoy a taste of the old life again. The face in the fur-trimmed hat looked very pretty, and Rhena felt kindly towards it.

"Thank you," she answered gently. "I appreciate your kindness, but it is impossible; I cannot go. I have shut the door upon my old life. I do not wish to open it again." She was silent as if memory claimed her thought. Then she added, with a smile that Louise could just see through the unlighted room: "Besides,

I have my regular army duties to perform every night. I cannot leave my people, and there is a great deal of visiting to be done now. The distress and suffering in miners' families are increasing very fast."

"I'm sorry you cannot come," said Louise. She rose slowly to go. "Stuart speaks of you occasionally, and I thought perhaps it would please him to invite you." The girl watched Rhena carefully. Rhena did not change color; she stood like a statue, pale and still. Louise continued: "And I thought probably you might feel like coming to the informal affair we have planned. We have asked the Waltons and the Wymans and the Vasplaines, and Una and I will do the honors of the music room, where we hoped we might have your voice to assist. Una plays beautifully."

"Una?" asked Rhena.

"Yes, Miss Vasplaine. It comes natural for me to call her 'Una' of course. We were girls together, and besides," added Louise with a short laugh, "since her recent engagement to my brother Stuart it seems more natural than ever. Well, I'm sorry you cannot come. We would have enjoyed hearing you sing."

"You are kind to think of me and I am grateful for it," replied Rhena. The closest observer could not have detected any special emotion in her voice and manner. She impressed even Louise, with that lie about Stuart warm on her lips, as possessed, even in those dingy surroundings and in the army garb, of a grace and refinement that very few persons could equal. Louise felt like making some commonplace remark about the hardship of Rhena's life work, but something in Rhena's manner forbade it and she went out of the room with a

conventional "Good evening, Miss Dwight. So sorry to think you cannot favor us."

Out on the street Louise murmured to herself: "I was pretty sure she would refuse to come; and I don't think she is the person to lead Stuart on after that little bit of previous information about Una." She smiled and set her face for home, walking briskly through the now fast-falling snow.

To any one familiar with the character of Louise Duncan her call on Rhena Dwight and her falsehood as to Stuart's engagement were perfectly easy to understand. It measured the extent of Louise's petty, narrow ideas of life and all its meaning. She had observed enough of Stuart's manner of late to feel sure that his feeling for Rhena had become more than sentiment; and it was the last thing in the world that she wanted. If she could prevent any attachment with a Salvation Army leader, she would do it in any way short of being found out in deceit. Hence her lie to Rhena. How would she ever know? To be sure, Rhena was an experienced woman in the way of society, and she might have been on her guard if she had known Louise. But the sister of Stuart had left an impression of kind-heartedness with the former society leader, and Rhena felt, as she said, grateful for the apparent sincerity which would recognize her present position in Champion as entitling her to a place still in polite society.

Rhena did not light her lamp after Louise went out.

She sat by the window, looking out on the falling snow. When the time came to go out for the meeting, which was held regularly in the hall instead of the street, now that the nights had become stormy, she

shivered with the cold. Her lips moved in an audible prayer that some one going by the passage heard: "O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, pardon me and help me!" There were very few out that evening. A great storm grew with the night, and in the morning all Champion, with its setting of pine-covered hills, was deep in the snow that swept past Rhena's windows in drifted billows high up against the old storage room door.

That afternoon Stuart came down through the drifts to meet with Andrew and Eric as the three had agreed, to talk over the matter of relief for the miners, and also to arrange for something more permanent than a plan of local relief for the immediate distress of Champion. Eric managed to get through the snow, and insisted that the struggle did him good. Andrew welcomed them in his hearty fashion and began to talk roses the first thing.

"Look at that! If that isn't a beauty, I don't know what is. Just let me cut that for you, Mr. Duncan.

"I won't take it!—not with the 'Mister.' You have forgotten the bargain," replied Stuart, smiling.

Andrew looked a little confused; then he said, "I did not know how Vassall here might take it. He is a prior attachment."

"Eric," said Stuart, laying a hand on his old friend's shoulder, "do you object if Burke here calls me Stuart and I call him Andrew? It seems absurd that when a man saves another man's life he should continue on such terms of formality as are used by ordinary acquaintances."

"My name is Eric then," replied Eric frankly. He

was a man of many faults, but littleness of soul and petty jealousy were not among them.

"That settles it then; it's to be Andrew, Eric and Stuart to the end of the chapter," assented Stuart eagerly. He was enthusiastic this afternoon. He had begun to be caught up in the passion of a great idea, and he felt able to do almost anything. It is true that, woven into all his thought of consecrated money and its wonderful power, there was in Stuart the glowing image of Rhena Dwight, and his love for her was growing in strength and meaning every moment. He had not seen her to speak to since that night in the Army Hall. But he did not know how strong a hold his feeling had upon his whole being until now, as he began to face a great opportunity, perhaps the greatest in his life, the slight form and pale face of the Salvation Army leader seemed to occupy a very prominent place there.

Andrew was cutting off two of the choicest roses. He gave one to Stuart and one to Eric.

"Say, it seems too bad to cut 'em off the plants that way," said Eric as he took the blossom and stuck it awkwardly into a buttonhole.

"That's what I grow them for," replied Andrew.

"How's your church work going on?" asked Stuart, pulling himself out of his brown study after thanking Andrew for the rose.

"Oh, I don't know yet. I'm slow to get acquainted, and this is a new field to me. If I can succeed in making the people believe they like me, I think we shall have a good time together. I never saw so many characters as there are up here."

"Do you count us in?" asked Eric.

"You're the very first ones. If I knew how, I'd put you two into a book."

"Anybody else?" asked Stuart.

Dr. Saxon. That is, if he would stand still long enough to be put."

"Yes, the doctor would have to go in sure," replied Eric. "Is that all?"

"The Salvation Army would have to come in, led by Miss Dwight," replied Andrew. "Then I would throw in some specimen miners and mix them up in various situations, and my book would be very interesting; that is, it would if I didn't mix them up so that they never could get unmixed," added Andrew frankly. "I never wrote a book in my life, but I believe Champion is full of material for it."

"Perhaps some one will put us into a story sometime," said Stuart contemplatively. "Meanwhile, my dear friends, to the realities of our present conditions. Every man could probably write one good story if he had to. At any rate we live a story in our own lives, and I am beginning to learn that every human being is a tragedy, a possible one, I mean. Since I became a Christian,"—Stuart spoke with a dignity that could be called nothing less than reverential,—"I see a new world. I understand Paul's statement, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new.' And among them all nothing is so new to me as human beings."

"They seem pretty old and commonplace to me sometimes," said Eric. "But I believe I know what you mean."

"I don't believe you do wholly. But I'll let you

think you do. Now, we are going to see if three men of brains and willingness, with an interest in humanity, can do anything to help solve some of the questions that have been thrust into some of our own lives. First, say, there is the money part of it."

Stuart paused, and Andrew looked thoughtfully over at him. All three men were now at a point where the conversation and their object in conferring together had shut out everything but the most intense and absorbing interest.

"Well," said Eric at last, with his usual bluntness, "you're the only one that has any money. It's for you to say what can be done on that line."

"As near as I can figure out," continued Stuart as if he had not heard Eric, "the property left by father is worth in the neighborhood of four million dollars. Half of it is in the mines and their equipment. Father had full control of the property at his death, and practically operated the mines as the company. You know, Eric, how father managed. While the other ranges went into the hands of stockholders, leaving a few men in control with a surplus of stock, father worked along from the time he was a captain in the Beury mine, running all the business by himself. It is practically in the same shape now. I could sell out in ordinary times for two millions. The mines turned out under father's management wonderfully remunerative. Then there is nearly a million that I hold in trust for Louise. That, of course, is hers to do with as she chooses. The remaining million is in such shape that it could be converted into cash at any time, and is entirely under my control."

"Then you have a million dollars to spend?" asked Andrew simply.

"Yes, it amounts to that. Of course the mines pay for themselves while they are running. This million represents savings, accumulations in the business, profits; most of it was made in less than five years."

The men were all silent again. There was a good deal of hard thinking going on. Stuart spoke first:—

"The question now is, how can this money best be used to the glory of God? How would you use it if it was yours, Andrew? He asked the question suddenly, turning to the minister, who sat close by the table with one arm resting on it, close by one of his favorite plants.

Andrew stared at Stuart and did not know what to say. At last he exclaimed: "That's a very hard question to answer! In my wildest dreams I never approached the edge of a thought of a million dollars to spend. I never had over one thousand dollars a year in my life. I should think a million dollars would buy up all the hothouses in the United States, and as for rare specimens, well, it takes my breath away to imagine what a million dollars would do. But I'm off the track. Yes, I know what you mean. It isn't a question of what I could get for myself, but what I could get for other people, and I am inclined to believe it is harder to spend money for others than for yourself."

"I don't know about that," broke in Eric. "I have always believed if I had a million dollars to spend in Champion, I could make good use of it."

"Go on, Eric, tell what you would do," said Stuart, turning to him.

"Well, for one thing," spoke Eric, his dark eye glow-

ing under the impulse of his idea, "I would build a house or hall dedicated to the cause of labor. I would have it in the center of every useful and inspiring idea that could elevate and enlarge a man's mind, sensibilities, and affections. I would have a platform there on which the best speakers, singers, and preachers could bring their messages to the people. I would put two of the greatest joys of the world within easy reaching distance of every workingman in Champion; I mean music and flowers. They would be under the roof of this building dedicated to the common people. Oh, I have lain awake many a night planning out the spending of other people's money for my people!" said Eric, with a smile that was sadder than tears. "The heartache, oh the heartache I have felt at the wasted music and perfume of God's rich earth! And if I had money to use, I could bring some of these things close to the lives of these men and brothers whose lives are spent underground, who live like animals, as if God had never made the birds to sing and the violets to bloom. I almost hesitate to say to you two what I have felt as I have known of the rich and petted men and women of society wasting their money by the millions on their own narrow, selfish pleasure, while thousands of the children of the street and the mine never heard any sound sweeter than a coarse note from an untrained voice, or felt the beauty and perfume of anything better than a dusty weed by the roadside. These wants, these differences between the rich and the poor, and the knowledge that money could work miracles of pleasure for my brethren, and my own consciousness of helplessness in the matter, have almost made me at times a hater of

men, a blasphemer against God and all the universe. Money!" cried Eric, as he clinched his hand on his knee, while the face, pale and worn from the recent injury, glowed with the fire of its inward spiritual agony, "if I had just what will be wasted in this town this winter in wicked display and foolishness, I could make a thousand children happy for a lifetime and save hundreds of souls from cursing God for ever having been born into a world of such inequality. I have thought sometimes I already lived in hell instead of earth. But—well, excuse me; I didn't mean to get started this way. I'm mistaken and narrow and one-sided and unreasonable and all that, and no one knows it better than I do. All the same, I am sure that, as there is a God who rules and judges, there will come a day of reckoning for the men and women who have spent his money on their selfish pleasures, regardless of God's children who have gone through life starved and parched for the lack of the beautiful gifts of their Father which he intended all should enjoy."

There was a silence in the room. Andrew went over to the window and looked out. He came back to the table at once, and without a word cut half a dozen of the choicest roses from his plants, hastily rolled them up in a paper and, without a word of explanation, rushed out of the room. Eric and Stuart could hear him tearing down the stairs three steps at a time. They looked at each other in silence, and then rose and went over to the window.

Crossing the square by one of the diagonal paths cut through by the snowplow was Mrs. Binney, the wife of the injured miner, the woman who had come into see

Dr. Saxon the day before Stuart and Eric had been caught in the mine. She was carrying a basket on one arm, and was on her way home after having been down to Champion from her house up on the hill. Andrew had been up to see Jim several times.

Eric and Stuart, looking out, saw Andrew wade through a snowdrift that reached almost to his neck and stop the astonished Mrs. Binney just as she was turning off to go up across the railroad tracks. He gave her the roses in the paper; she put them in her basket and bowed her curiously shawled and bonneted head. Andrew rushed back, darted upstairs, pulled a broom out of the closet, retired to the hall, brushed himself off, and coming back said, panting, "Excuse me; I am sometimes taken that way. It is not dangerous."

"It would be a good thing if it was; that is, if it was catching," said Eric significantly.

As for Stuart he had gone back to his seat and was very thoughtful, in a great study over many things.

"I am wrestling with a problem greater than any that ever challenged me," he said at last as the others remained quiet. "I need more wisdom and more knowledge. I believe, as Eric says, that money can create miracles of a certain sort in Champion; but shall I say, 'Go to, now! Behold me! I am Stuart Duncan, the mine owner. I have a million dollars. I am going to spend this money for your benefit. My friends, how will you have it? In libraries, soup houses, music, flowers, lectures, preaching, art, or what not? I am ready to Christianize, elevate, improve, and lift up, to bridge over the chasms that lie between rich and poor and educated and ignorant. You just keep quiet and the

million dollars will do the rest!" Is that the idea? Given, a million dollars, to bring in the millennium. Is that the relation between a million dollars and a million years of paradise? It is not so easy. I can see the hall dedicated to labor. That is a possibility. And the music and the flowers and all that. Good. But there is a good deal more behind and within. One thing I know very certainly: I must see for myself what the needs are in Champion. I know in a general way, but I want to know in detail."

"There's one person can tell you all about it," said Andrew.

"Who's that?"

"Miss Dwight."

Stuart flushed. From where he sat he could see the front of the Salvation Army Hall. Rhena was just going in with one of the women belonging to the army.

"I'm told that she is familiar already with nearly every case of suffering in Champion," continued Andrew. "She has even been out on the hills as far as Cornish town. It's a pokerish place in winter, full of pit-holes and abandoned prospecting shafts. I wouldn't want to get caught out there and lose my way after dark with this new snow covering up bad places."

Stuart did not answer. He was looking from the window and saw Rhena and the woman come out of the hall with bundles. They crossed the street and disappeared behind the engine house, going in the direction of the Cornish town path.

"What did you say?" asked Stuart suddenly, as he came back from his little journey with Rhena. Andrew

and Eric were sitting where they did not see what Stuart had seen.

"I said that in case you ever fall into a hole in Cornish town it might be just as well to leave the spending of that money to Eric and me," replied Andrew, nodding at Eric. "That is, leave it before you fell in. For the chances are that no one will be prospecting around at this time of the year with a rope to pull you out."

"I beg pardon," said Stuart. "Let us get at the subject again. It's very evident we cannot settle this matter offhand or in a hurry. But I'm sure the Lord will lead us to do something right. He hasn't given us brains and hearts and then left us to make fools of ourselves, especially when we don't want to."

We do not need to give in detail the afternoon's discussion. The plan for using the money was not fully shaped in any definite way. It could not be.

Even Eric was obliged to confess that the element of time was necessary to help in the solution. They were not planning for a day or a month or one winter, but for a good many years to come.

So Stuart finally went home, after running into the office and leaving word there with a clerk to supply certain families that were known to be in want with fuel and food for the immediate time, and also leaving word to send for him in case any special demand came in later on in the evening. The miners had recently made several personal requests for help, and Stuart, in his growing eagerness to know as much as possible of the facts in the town, had determined to go himself at the next pressing call and satisfy his desire for the truth.

After supper that evening, Louise and Aunt Royal were discussing the coming party or "affair," which had been fixed for the following week. Stuart was sitting with them in the drawing room. There was a beautiful open fire in the grate. The mantel and tiling were handsome pieces of imported marble. The lights had not been turned on yet. It was not quite seven o'clock.

"What have you decided to decorate with?" asked Louise. She had great respect for Aunt Royal as an authority in all matters of society or entertainment, and deferred to her opinion without debate or dispute.

"I think we had better have Nyphetia roses in the front room, and small ferns with pearl roses in the dining room. Smilax and carnations will be the proper trimming for the library, and lilies of the valley for the music room. The last reception I attended in New York, the Dupreys decorated the entire house with lilies of the valley. The effect was lovely."

"What did you say it cost?" asked Stuart, rousing himself to take part in the conversation. He had heard only a part of what Aunt Royal had said. She looked over at her nephew in surprise.

"I didn't say. I heard that it cost about a thousand dollars. That is a small item for flowers in the Duprey receptions."

"It must have been lovely," said Louise, clasping her hands so that her diamond rings were the most conspicuous part of her in the light of the fire.

"I think it must have been horrible," said Stuart quietly.

"Horrible?" Aunt Royal spoke as if she had not understood her nephew.

"Yes; not the flowers, but the use of that much money to decorate for pleasure any man's private residence for the enjoyment of people who could see lilies of the valley any time they wanted to."

"Well! well!" Aunt Royal could not get any further. Louise broke in with a laugh.

"Oh, Stuart's been converted lately to some of the communistic socialistic ideas. Didn't you know that, aunt? The next we know he will begin to object to our using roses for decoration next week here in the house."

Stuart did not say anything. He was thinking of Eric's speech that afternoon, and his heart beat heavily as he thought of all the wasted music and flowers of the earth. Who was getting the best of these two great and beautiful gifts of God?

Was it not the very people who were able to pay the highest prices for them? Where was the right in squandering a thousand dollars of God's own money to enjoy the beauty of flowers, when people were dying of hunger and misery in the nearest tenement? If it was God's money, and if men were only trustees of the funds, would God probably consider that a right use of the money? It was only one phase of the doctrine of stewardship which Stuart had lately begun to believe in.

But Aunt Royal was not the person to remain silent after Stuart's use of the word "horrible" in connection with her decorative ideas as they were connected with social functions. She asked, sharply for her:—

"Do you mean to say, Stuart, that you think we have no right to use flowers in giving pleasure to our invited guests?"

"No; I did not say that," replied Stuart dryly.

"What do you mean then?"

"I can't make you or Louise understand me," said Stuart after a pause.

"No; Stuart talks in riddles of late. He thinks we are too aristocratic and unchristian," said Louise. There was a sneer in her voice which hurt Stuart keenly.

"Why do you say that, Louise? You know I am thinking of the poor families who are beginning to suffer at this time. Surely we ought to do as much for them as for ourselves. If we spend a hundred dollars to decorate the rooms with flowers for a party, we ought to give twice as much to help feed the hungry. The better way would be to take the money spent on the flowers and spend it on food."

"What!" cried Louise angrily. "On the people who have brought their condition on themselves by their own foolishness! Who is to blame for their being hungry and cold, if not themselves?"

"The women and babies are not to blame, and they are the ones to feel the suffering most," said Stuart quietly.

"Well, you can use your money that way if you want to, but I don't waste mine on people who don't know when they're well off."

Stuart rose and stood with his back to the fire. He was agitated with all the new ideas that had crowded into his life since the day God had spoken to him. He felt that the revolution in him would cut square across all the traditions and usages of polite society, especially in the matter of money and its personal expenditure.

Finally Louise and Aunt Royal took up the subject

of the coming party and began discussing the families who were invited.

Stuart still stood silently engrossed in his own thoughts, and hearing only now and then a word. At last he was roused by Louise.

"Stuart, will you sing with Una next week? You remember that duo you sang before you went abroad?"

"Yes, I'll sing if I am here that evening," replied Stuart, with a feeling that he was fast losing all his interest in the things that once amused him. He had a splendid baritone voice, and was a favorite singer with all his friends.

"Why, are you planning to be away?"

"No; I did not know what might happen, under the condition of the strike and all."

"We've invited the Meltons and the Vasplaines. They would be very much disappointed if you were not here," said Aunt Royal.

"I shall probably be here," said Stuart briefly.

Louise rose suddenly and went up to her brother.

"And I invited Miss Dwight, Stuart. She refused to come; but don't you think I am too aristocratic for anything to invite her?"

Stuart looked at Louise in astonishment. The words sent the color to his cheek and set his pulses beating.

"You knew she would not come," he said in a low voice.

Louise started as if she had been caught in her lie to Rhena. She went back to her seat and was silent. It was at times a mad freak with Louise to say or do the unexpected thing. She was not original, but she sometimes took a malicious pleasure in startling people.

"I am glad she refused," said Aunt Royal, who sometimes forgot her diplomacy in her gratification at things. "She certainly would have felt very much out of place among us."

"Yes, that's so," said Stuart, provoked into a statement he could easily have made before his conversion. "She would have been out of place among your other guests, because most of them are uneducated boors and clowns in comparison with a lady like Miss Dwight!"

Aunt Royal was speechless. She could not find anything to say at first. Finally she began, in her usual gentle voice:—

"I am surprised, Stuart, to hear you speak that way of a common Salvation Army"—

That was as far as Aunt Royal could get. Stuart interrupted with an emphasis that petrified both the women:—

"I will not allow you or any one to speak a disrespectful word of the woman I love, and who, if God is good enough to me, will sometime become my wife!"

With the words Stuart walked out of the room, leaving his aunt and Louise gasping as if a pail of ice water had been thrown over them. And what they said when they recovered, history saith not, and Stuart never knew nor cared.

He went away to his own room and sat there without turning on the lights. He knew that he had precipitated matters in the home by his brief but outright declaration of his purpose. He did not regret it, but he was a little afraid he had shown the unchristian spirit in his words or manner. The old Adam had a place in him yet? No, he said to himself, he was a new man; the

very best evidence of it was his present action. He kneeled and prayed to be forgiven if he had spoken wrongly. He was still praying when a servant brought word that he was wanted at the telephone.

He went down and was informed by the clerk in the office that two of the miners had come in, and acting under instructions the clerk had called up Stuart to come and see them. Stuart told the clerk to hold the men until he could get down. He went out at once and drove into the town.

The men who had come to the office were residents of Cornish town. They had come for help, in a case not their own but that of a miner who lay sick and in need at the farthest limits of the settlement.

Stuart hastily loaded his cutter with necessities, and with one of the men to direct the way he started out. The night was dark and a fine snow was falling. The drifts were piled high on either side of the road. Stuart knew he could drive only part of the way. As he went by the Salvation Army Hall he stopped a minute to speak to one of the men who was standing on the steps. The hall was lighted, but there was no meeting going on.

"Miss Dwight went up to Cornish town this afternoon with some clothes to distribute, and is not yet back," the man said in answer to a question of Stuart's.

He drove on with a great feeling of uneasiness at his heart. He recalled Andrew's words about the abandoned pits and prospecting holes all about Cornish town and on the sidehills. The thought that Rhena might be in peril there quickened the stir of his blood. He drove his horse with a reckless disregard of the speed or the danger. The miner who was with him, in speak-

ing of it afterwards, said: "Tell you, boys, I thought most I was with the doctor, and I kept saying my little prayer, as everybody does who rides with him."

When they reached the limit of the road Stuart left the horse and cutter in a shed behind one of the cottages. The people in the cottage there had seen Miss Dwight come up that afternoon. She had stopped a minute to warm herself and then gone on.

When Stuart reached the house at the end of the miners' path it was snowing furiously. Rhena had been there before him. She had left her bundle of clothing, and that was the last that any one had seen of her. Stuart rushed out of the miserable cabin and down the path to the next cottage of the settlement. Nothing had been seen of Rhena on her supposed return to town. She could not have passed the two men on their way up. Stuart stood in the little path listening, with his heart trembling. The great pines sobbed under the rising wind. Far below the lights of Champion gleamed here and there through the falling snow. And never had Stuart Runcan loved Rhena Dwight as at this moment, when the terror of the fear possessed and choked him that she had wandered out into the treacherous pits, and was perhaps even now lying at the bottom of one of them, dead or dying. He prayed as he stood there: "My God! my God! save her, for I love her more than my life!"

CHAPTER VIII.

COMPLICATIONS.

STUART had known every foot of Cornish town as a boy, and was familiar even now with most of the curious little lanes and paths that cut it across and tracked up and down the side of the great hill like the marking of some gigantic game. There was probably no other place just like it in America. The prospecting holes were of various depths. Some of them had caved in at the sides and were shaped like old cellars or cisterns with masses of rubbish at the bottom. Others were wells, anywhere from fifty to one hundred feet deep, and especially dangerous in winter, when the snow, lodging on bushes growing about the shaft's mouth, artfully concealed the locality of danger.

It was Stuart's first thought, when he calmed himself to think and act, that Rhena had attempted to make a short cut by one of the miners' paths from the upper part of the settlement of Cornish town to Champion, and in the dark, and confusion caused by the change which snow makes in the appearances of old landmarks, had stumbled into one of the shafts. Under this conviction he ran back to the house where Rhena had been and from which he had just come himself, and begging a lantern he started out on a path which at first, in his terror, he had forgotten. He had followed it but a little way when the lantern revealed

a small black object right in the center of the path. He stooped eagerly and picked it up. It was a lady's winter glove trimmed with fur at the wrist. He recognized it as Rhena's. He had seen her wearing that kind of a glove a few days before. He placed it in his pocket and went on as fast as he dared, eager, and yet dreading, with a horror he never felt before, the possible discoveries he might make. The miner who had come up with him had gone down to the settlement at Stuart's suggestion to rouse others to come out and join in the search. So he was alone up there in the mysterious shadows of the pine-covered slope. Every step he took over the small, barely defined trail was like a step into an unknown land, and yet he was conscious, even as he dwelt with terror upon the strange adventure so suddenly thrust upon him, of going over that very path one warm summer day when a boy only ten years old, and the smell of the balsams as they gave out their peculiar pungent odor in the warmth of the sun seemed to be in his senses now. Several persons had evidently been over the path that very day, for the snow was trodden down, and the marks of feet were not yet wholly covered by new snow.

Quite a long distance from the place where the glove was found, Stuart came to an old stump which marked a giant pine of many years before. The path turned about the foot of this stump, and on the other side of it, as he strode on, praying in his heart for mercy and safety to be shown this woman, he saw her, lying so still and white that he dared not think what it might mean. She had fallen over a mass of ore that had rolled into the path, and one hand and arm lay

stretched out directly over one of the most dangerous pits on the hill. So near had she been to instant death!

With a cry Stuart caught her up. Still, he dared not question whether what he held was alive or dead. He said to himself he would not ask. He knew she was not conscious. He moved now with more of instinct than by sight or reason, feeling his way down the hill. He seemed to feel confident that he would not fall into any of the shafts with this burden; and with a strength and purpose that moved him with even more than his usual determination he went on down, keeping before him the glimmering light of the nearest cottage. Finally he had reached a cross path to the one he had first entered, and in which Rhena had met with her accident. The light from the cottage had disappeared. He was now in a hollow or depression of the slope which had sometimes been used by the miners for a rough roadway to one part of the Davis mine, and as he entered it he thought that he could feel rather than see that tracks had recently been made through the hollow. He went down very cautiously. Rhena was still unconscious.

Suddenly a sound came to Stuart from above. He stopped and listened. It was the sound of sleigh bells. He could not trust his hearing, and listened more intently. Yes, that was too common a sound in Champion every winter to be mistaken. As he listened, and looked up into the opaque space filled with snow which fell straight down in the hollow where the wind was cut off, a horse emerged like a great shadow and a vague rough outline of something behind.

Stuart shouted; and the next instant he knew that there was only one man in all Champion or De Mott,

or for that matter in the entire range, who would dare drive up or down Cornish town hollow to Davis hill at night and in winter. It was Dr. Saxon, and he had been out to see Jim Binney and taken the old road up the hollow to save time. It was a common saying in Champion that the doctor would calmly have taken a short cut through the infernal regions rather than go around, especially if there was a patient in great danger on the other side.

The horse was like his master, and could pick his way over the hills and through the rough trails like a mountain goat. He had a great gift for getting through snowdrifts, and one of the miners said that he once saw the doctor's horse help his master right the cutter when it tipped over, by sitting down on the shaft that was uppermost, while the doctor pushed on the other side. Certain it is that never did a lighthouse gleam on a lost mariner with its saving light more joyfully than did the familiar horse and cutter appear to Stuart, as they plunged right out of a great hole, and tumbled down almost over him as he stood there holding his precious burden.

"Whoa! Steady there, Ajax!" cried the voice of the doctor from the cutter, which bounded out of the hole all right and came to sight again, like a snowplow on an engine just after plunging out of a drift.

"Doctor!" cried Stuart. "Thank God! Quick! Miss Dwight! She is dead or dying! I found her unconscious on the upper trail!"

He crowded through the snow up to the side of the cutter, and placed Rhena on the seat beside the astonished doctor.

"Well! well! if this doesn't beat the Salvation Army drum all to pieces! I can't escape from practice even in Cornish town hollow. You take the prize for furnishing material on the spot. Are there any more of the army dead or wounded or dying around here?"

"Hurry, doctor! Save her! Say, is she dying? Is she seriously hurt?"

"Humph! Well, I tell you Stuart, she's a plucky lass, and it's ten to one that she's dangerously hurt. No, she's not dead." All this time the doctor, who never wasted any breath talking and doing nothing, had been examining the condition of Rhena. "We'll get her right down to the town as fast as possible. Come, jump in and hold her. I can't drive and tend to her, too."

Stuart did as directed, and the horse lunged forward at the doctor's word. It seemed to Stuart that the doctor was mad to drive so in such a place.

"Do be careful, doctor! You'll kill us all! Go slower!" Stuart gasped, as he held Rhena and breathlessly braced himself against the back of the cutter.

"You've got your hands full without driving," was all the satisfaction Stuart could get; and before he could utter much more remonstrance they were out of the dangerous part of the hollow and had struck into the beginnings of the road that led down to Champion. From that point the two men did not speak until the doctor reined Ajax up in front of Rhena's lodging. He had chosen to go right on instead of stopping at any of the cottages, where the accommodations for help were so meager. The doctor carried Rhena into her room and left Stuart outside with the cutter. When Saxon finally came out he was able to bring Stuart good news. It was

a case of unconsciousness from a bad fall, but he did not fear any serious consequences.

They were standing by the cutter talking together, when one of the women looked from the door and called the doctor.

"O doctor, will you see if Miss Dwight's glove is out there anywhere? She's lost one of them."

"Shake that robe, Stuart," said the doctor as he flashed the lantern around on the sidewalk and about the cutter. "Like as not it's down in the bottom somewhere. Don't you find it?" he asked, not noticing what Stuart was doing. Getting no answer, he shouted back, "It's not here, ma'am! Must have dropped it on the way down." The woman shut the door and the doctor said, "Get in, Stuart, and I'll take you home."

Stuart climbed into the cutter without a word. As the doctor seated himself, and Ajax was about to make his usual wild plunge up the street, Stuart said, "I have Miss Dwight's glove in my pocket, doctor, and I am going to keep it."

"What's that!" exclaimed the doctor. He was nearly twice Stuart's age and had known him all his life. Stuart did not know any one to whom he felt like telling his secret more than to the doctor.

"But what's the good of one glove, Stuart?" The doctor was not quite sure that Stuart wanted to tell him all.

"I mean to have them both," replied Stuart frankly, looking right into the doctor's face. "Old friend, can't you see that I am in love with her, and at the very highest point of my life already because of it?"

Stuart spoke louder than he had meant to, forgetting

that persons were passing along the sidewalk. Several of the Salvation Army people had gone up to Rhena's lodgings to inquire about her. It is not probable that any heard Stuart, but the doctor suddenly struck Ajax, and the cutter whirled into the square and darted across one of the diagonals. Close by the band stand the doctor pulled up as suddenly as he had started, and said abruptly, "I'll wait for you."

"Wait for what?" exclaimed Stuart, astonished.

"Why, I thought maybe you might want to go up into the stand and tell all Champion that you were in love with Miss Dwight."

Stuart laughed softly. "I am not ashamed of it. Indeed, doctor, I do feel like shouting it out at times. No, no!" he added as the doctor started Ajax on again and they came out into the main street. "It is a matter of great pride with me. And at the same time I shrink from making it too common. There is no danger. Doctor, will you say, 'God bless you, Stuart', as you used to sometimes when other events in my life came on?"

"God bless you, Stuart! Ay, ay, 'that belongs to be', as my Cornish men say when they mean it ought to be so. You've chosen the best, pluckiest, and most character-endowed woman in all Champion or the State for that matter. Well, well, I knew it all the time! You and Eric think I'm so busy that I don't have time to notice anything. But that's because I see so much more than you do in a given time." There was a short pause. "If I were you, Stuart, I wouldn't keep that glove very long. It isn't just fair this cold weather."

"Thank you, doctor, I have been thinking of that," replied Stuart.

He had grown very thoughtful suddenly. His life had opened out into another possibility with this new experience. He was conscious of its bearing upon all the rest of the problems that knocked at his heart and mind for answers, and when he bade the doctor good night he went into the house thrilled through with the most profound conviction and persuasion that his life would shape this way or that according to the response of Rhena Dwight's soul to his. He was startled as for the first time he realized how strong his feeling was and how little he knew of hers. What could she be to him with all the social difference between them? It is true he had come to a place where social differences counted for very little with him, but how could he tell what she might think now that her life moved on the plane of Salvation Army methods? And then, there was his money and all. She had deliberately moved out from the world of wealth and fashion in which he still remained, of which he was yet a part. They were separated in this way by a great gulf of difference. On the other hand, he reflected, they had one great and common bond of sympathy in their Christian faith. After all, was not that stronger than anything else? What were conditions or artificial social distinctions by the side of the all-powerful oneness of spirit which disciples of the Master possessed in common? It was with that last thought on his heart that he finally went to rest.

He did not speak to Louise or his aunt of the evening's adventure when he saw them in the morning. His statement of the evening before concerning his feelings towards Rhena had driven the two women into a position of hostility to him that did not find immediate expres-

sion in words, but was very apparent none the less. Louise was angry to think that her attempts to deceive Rhena might and probably would result in nothing. Aunt Royal ignored the subject definitely, but there was no mistaking her entire opposition to Stuart's present attitude. It was true she did not understand him. Stuart was too engrossed in his perplexities and plans, and too much absorbed in the new life to feel all this very deeply, and yet it showed him how squarely his new life was henceforth to conflict with the old.

It was two days after this that Stuart, Eric, and Andrew met again to talk over matters, this time at Eric's cottage. Rhena had recovered. She was up and doing part of her work. Stuart had called to inquire after her, but had not seen her. He could not help feeling that when he did have an opportunity to speak, it would be an eventful meeting for him. He had inherited a large portion of his father's abrupt determination of conduct and action. All this faculty, intensified in another direction, under the influence of his spiritual awakening, burned as strong as in the old Stuart, only for another purpose. Paul was Saul Christianized. And the new Stuart was as likely to act in matters that required decision with as much quickness as the old Stuart, only with a larger and truer vision of the meaning of the action.

The three men met with a more serious and thoughtful bearing than at the other meeting. Every day in Champion now intensified the situation and increased the sum total of suffering. There was no outward sign of the Union weakening. The winter had set in definitely, and it looked very much as if the mines had

closed down for the season. Stuart remembered one winter when the mines had closed for a month through action of the owners in order to force up the price of ore. That was when he was a boy. He could still remember something of the suffering at that time. Now it promised to be infinitely worse.

"Eric, you have more influence with the men than any one on the ranges. Can't you persuade the Union to do something to arrive at a decision?" asked Stuart a little vaguely. He was feeling around after answers to a thousand questions, and he started the talk aimlessly because he was preoccupied.

"Well, what can I do? The owners are the ones to arrive at a decision. Can't you persuade them to agree to our demands and your own promise of two dollars a day?" replied Eric, who never hesitated to say what he felt, no matter how abrupt it might seem.

"No, I have no influence that way with the other owners. You ought to see some of the letters I get from Cleveland. I tell you the owners will not give in. The whole situation is horrible. Sometimes, Eric, Andrew, I feel as if the men were destitute of all sense. What right have a third or a fourth of them to keep the rest from work because all cannot get the same wages?"

"They don't look at it that way. The principle is, with them, all based on the right or wrong side of the demand for the two dollars. At the same time, as I said the other day, I look at the strike from another point of view. I am ready to acknowledge it is a miserable way to try to get justice done. The men can never make up what they have lost by this idleness. But, good God, Stuart!" ejaculated Eric, hobbling to the window and

looking out on the snow-covered hills just back of the cottage, "what other way is there, if the owners refuse to listen to appeals and arbitration? Are we to submit indefinitely to starvation wages because we can't help ourselves? Of course I look at it from a workingman's standpoint. Boiled down to its simplest terms, the men don't see anything but reason in asking that a business like the ore industry, that has made a few men princely rich, ought to divide up its profits more fairly and make a good many persons more comfortable instead of making a select few uncomfortably wealthy."

"Do you believe a man can be uncomfortably wealthy?" asked Andrew with a smile as if he believed it himself.

"You don't need to go outside this room to find one," answered Stuart soberly. "What good can I do with all my money in a case like this? I seem to be as helpless as either of you."

"No, you're not. You can relieve a great deal of distress. Money is a great power in that way."

"But look here, Eric. Isn't this the situation? Here are five thousand men out on a strike. A thousand of them have been offered their demands. They have refused out of sympathy for the rest, who will never get what they ask, for I can't compel the other companies to do what I think is the right thing. Now, then, these men are faced with starvation, or, at least, with great suffering this winter. Shall I say to them, practically, 'Never mind, I have money; I will take care of you indefinitely, or until the money is gone'? It seems to me that the thousand men ought to go to work if they have an offer at their own terms. What do you think, Andrew?"

"I think as you do. I regard the strike as a disaster. At the same time, the men are doing as thousands of men have done and will continue to do, until we have a better system than we have at present of settling the differences between men who labor with the brain and those who labor with the hand. Would it be possible to provide the men with work of any kind, so that they would not be fed in idleness?"

"Why, what can miners do except their own kind of work? Who can manufacture work in a country like this, where the whole industry revolves about one thing? Besides—well, go on, Eric, if you want to speak," said Stuart, who saw Eric impatiently biting his lips and nervously clinching his hands.

"I don't know what to say!" burst out Eric. "The whole situation is maddening. The men are right, and the men are wrong. If their methods of getting justice are at fault, the demand itself for justice I believe is right. But what can you expect? Who, for all these years, has paid any attention to the human end of this ore-producing business? What care do the men at Cleveland have for the souls, or the development of the souls of these men, who dig the stuff out of the ground that helps buy other men costly luxuries, and fine clothes and houses, travel, education, pleasures, and beauties of all sorts? What are we reaping now but the fruits of a great sowing of selfishness in the one great passion for money, and what it will bring? I ask you two men, who have been reared in a finer atmosphere than mine, if it is not true that the wage workers of the world, ignorant or mistaken or wrong and even vicious though at times they may have been, and are, still have sinned accord-

ing to their light less deeply or less wholly than the men of great wealth and education and social power. I am not saying that we are perfect, or never make mistakes, or that the selfishness is all on one side; but I do say that this present condition would not now be on us here if the men who have made their fortunes by the toil of the miners had acted like Christian men. How many of the mine owners have got together and prayed for wisdom to settle this matter right? Not one of them, except Stuart here. And yet—well, when I get started, I feel as if I could break all bounds. There is a fire in my bones over this problem. I don't believe there is a man living who can devise a thorough remedy. If he can, he stands guilty before God for keeping silent. And this much is certain: no man or nation or form of government known to civilization is free from these differences between the men of muscle and the men of money. Why, only this morning the papers had telegraphic dispatches announcing tremendous strikes in five different countries,—England, France, Germany, Australia, and the United States. There are more than a hundred thousand men out on strikes this very minute. I know there is great discontent, and men say great foolishness, on the part of the men of labor. Grant it. The fact is we live in an age of unrest. But at the bottom the whole secret of the trouble lies in a disregard of humanity in a passion for getting wealth first of all. The love of money has wrecked empires, and it will smash our civilization, unless"—Eric stopped abruptly and buried his face in his hands.

Stuart stepped up to him and laid his hand on Eric's shoulder. "Well, Eric," he said simply, "God will tri-

umph in the end. Let's hold fast to the great truths that have always been true."

"There is no solution of these difficulties, I am sure," said Andrew after a moment of quiet in the room, "except as it comes along the religious lines. I believe the next great factor in what is called the labor question will be the religious factor. I see no possible hope for a better condition unless it is brought about by the appeal to and a belief in Christianity as the real source of final adjustment of men's relation with one another in the social compact. In reality the problem consists in getting men on both sides to act like Christians. There could be no possible clash, for instance, between you two men, if either one worked for the other, because you love each other. Love for one another, therefore, is, after all, the greatest thing in the world, because it is the great and final adjuster of all social problems and differences."

"I believe that, too," said Stuart, pacing up and down the little room. "I don't question the final triumph of love and right. But we don't live in the millennium yet. And we have our own questions local to us right here and now."

"There can't be any doubt about our duty to the suffering women and children," said Andrew. "And I can tell you there's a lot of it beginning. One of the worst things about it all is the way the men are beginning to drink. What little savings many of them had are going this way."

"Curse the saloon! Oh, curse that hell on earth!" cried Eric suddenly. Stuart and Andrew started at the vehemence of his tone. "We go into our churches on

Sunday and pray and preach for peace and purity and forgiveness and love, and blessing on little children and all that, and then on election day we go and vote with all the rum fiends on earth to perpetuate a system by local option that damns with its infernal breath every pure desire and every upward reach of humanity, and the prayers of the nation ought to come back into its homes and down upon its religious altars as curses, as they are coming, until we learn how horribly foolish and wicked we have been not to act our prayers out in our votes against this devil. The saloon has done my people more harm than any one thing in our civilization."

Stuart was silent. For the first time he felt the force of Eric's passion in the matter. He remembered that the last time he and his father voted they voted for license. So did nearly every church member in Champion. So did every one of the forty saloon keepers there at present.

"Well, we can't drive the saloon out this winter. It's a legalized institution so far as it has a right to sell to those who want to buy," at last Stuart said sadly. "It's one more factor in the problem. Let's face it like men and hope for better things to come. Of course Andrew is right about the relief of suffering women and children. I have a plan, too, that I believe can be carried out to a certain extent in getting the men to work instead of receiving aid in idleness. I need more time to work it out. Meanwhile we ought to consult with the doctor and the city officers as to the best and most effective way of"—

There was a knock at the door and Dr. Saxon came in. "I haven't but a minute to stay. Heard you were

here. Wanted to tell you that the typhoid has started in and looks like a bad job. Never knew typhoid to come this way in winter before, but all the streams are poisoned. Jim Binney is going with it. Sanders' two girls are down with it. Cornish town is likely to be swept with it. I can't make these people obey my directions about the drainage. I find they've been drinking poisoned water all the fall. The mines ought to furnish the doctor with a company of militia with orders to stand guard over these obstinate, stupid old"—

The doctor choked off the next word, and went on: "And if they didn't obey, shoot 'em on the spot and save expenses of medical attendance. Tell you, Stuart, I'll run up a bill against the company for all this work I've put in lately without pay. I'm tired of it. Been out on Davis hill every day now for a month. Tipped over this afternoon coming down the Iron Cliff road and got two bushels of snow up my sleeves. If there is anything I hate, it's snow up my sleeves. I'm going to quit running my head into avalanches for these ungrateful, thankless"—

Just then a loud knock at the door interrupted the doctor, who all the time he was speaking was shaking the snow off his coat upon the stove, which hissed and sputtered with the doctor's vigorous growl.

"Is the doctor here?" said a voice as Eric went to the door and opened it.

"Yes; what do you want?"

"Lew Trethven has broken his leg. Fell into prospecting hole near upper trail of Cornish town. He wants doctor to come right up."

"Yes; hear that, will you!" said the doctor, who

was listening hard to catch every word. "Trethven has broken every leg of his body three separate times since I've been here. If he had six legs, he'd break every one of 'em. He always falls into a hole at the close of day, when I'm the farthest off and feel the least like going to see him. I've mended him so often that he looks like a bamboo fish rod."

"Say, doctor, can you come right up?" asked the man outside as he caught a glimpse of him through the opening.

"No; I haven't had anything to eat all day since breakfast. Tell Trethven to wait until morning. He's used to breaking his legs by this time. Tell him to set the fracture himself. Tell him I'm sick. Tell him"—

Eric shut the door, and the man outside walked slowly away. The doctor saw him go by the window.

"Excuse me," he muttered, "I forgot to blanket Ajax." He darted out of the room, and Stuart saw him go around the corner and overtake the man. Ajax was standing out near the street where the doctor had left him. Stuart saw Saxon rush the messenger from Trethven into the cutter, climb in himself, leaving one foot out as usual, turn Ajax around with such haste that for a moment it was a matter of doubt whether the miner would remain inside or outside the reeling, swaying cutter, and then they disappeared behind a great drift by the side of the street.

When Stuart went home that afternoon he carried with him a burden that grew heavier as the twilight deepened. There were more questions to settle than a few about the expenditure of a million dollars. Humanity was full of refusals to be helped. It was the same

cry that Jesus made, "They will not come unto me that they might have eternal life." And these saloons! He walked past a dozen on the main street. They never had thrust themselves so conspicuously into his senses before. And as he was going by one of them, a crowd of miners noisily burst out and scattered over the sidewalk. One or two of them noticed Stuart and seemed ashamed as they slunk by. He went on past the Salvation Hall and could not help thinking of Rhena, living her daily life in such surroundings, working with this rough, turbulent element, although the large part of the miners had so far kept away from the saloon.

He lingered a little as he walked by, hoping to get a glimpse of Rhena, but did not see her and went on home.

The next few days were days of great anxiety to Stuart. The doctor's predictions as to the typhoid fever proved correct. It broke out and swept over Cornish town with great fury. No one could remember when such an epidemic had raged there. Stuart sent down to Chicago and had several trained nurses come up and begin duty at his expense. He blessed God for the things that money could do in cases like this. He also relieved Dr. Saxon by hiring two assistants, and of course made the doctor himself understand that all the work he did while the mines were shut down would be reckoned the same as if the men were being paid.

But all this was nothing to what he longed to do. He went himself into the miners' cabins and acquainted himself with all their rough and meager surroundings. Several times during these visits he met Rhena, but she was always busy with her duties and hardly exchanged

a word. Stuart fancied she tried to avoid meeting him. Her manner was different. He wondered vaguely if she knew, if she had been told that he had found her that night and carried her down through the upper trail.

All this time he was also working at the problem of the men in idleness, and the more he thought it over the less confident he grew of his ability to solve the difficulty. Champion was a mining town, with nothing else of an industrial character to occupy labor of any kind. There had once been an attempt to put in smelting furnaces, but it had failed owing to the expense of fuel. Stuart confronted a condition of practical ignorance on the part of the miners concerning any kind of manual toil except that to which they had been born. It is, of course, hardly necessary to say that he daily used his influence with the men to persuade them to agree to his terms, and yet even while talking and urging he could not avoid a feeling of great unrest, and with it all went a certain admiration for the men who gave as their reason for not coming back to the Champion mines on Stuart's terms, "It don't belong to be for us to take the dollars, while all the rest of De Mott men be shut out at the old wages by other companies." The whole situation was a deadlock so far as the Union was concerned, and the whole problem was a complication of events and conditions in the commercial world, which Stuart faced as a new thing, especially when he found himself attempting to apply the teachings of Jesus to his part of it. He was willing to act on those teachings as fast as he discovered them, but other men connected with the strike on both sides were not willing. And he was, willingly or unwillingly, a part of the commercial system, and

as far as he had gone yet he saw little relief for the Champion men, or little opportunity for the use of the money he was ready to give or use, except to help lessen the immediate sufferings, regardless of what other people might call its cause. He had not been enough in the habit of using money for other people to know how to do it, either wisely or in a way to produce permanent results.

So the week went by and it was the night of Aunt Royal's and Louise's party. Stuart dreaded the occasion, because his heart was not in it at all. It seemed to him like a cruel thing, somehow, to be having a gay, expensive, dressy gathering, as he knew this affair would be, at a time when little children were dying, and rugged men and women in those wretched miners' cabins were tossing in the fever of that scourge which laid its bony knuckles of death against nearly every door in Cornish town, and grimly called one by one out of the burning heat within to the cold embrace of the messenger outside. Stuart spent the day in a round of visits. At different places he found Andrew and Rhena and Eric. All of them were worn and sad with the burdens of all they had done and carried. Rhena, especially, seemed to show the strain of her great sacrifices. Stuart came very near speaking to her once about her overwork. If he had, it is doubtful if he could have kept from telling his love in the same breath. Somehow he did not say it. And late in the evening he went home with a feeling as near the heartache as he ever knew. He seemed to have thought he must spend the day in as sacrificial and helpful a manner as possible, in atonement for the evening he was to spend. But certainly, if ever man was in a

poor frame of mind to enjoy festivity of the fashionable sort, Stuart was that man. Jim Binney had died that afternoon, and Stuart had been there just in time to see Rhena kneel by the bed and pray as the spirit went back from the rough tabernacle to God who gave it. The words of the prayer and the great sobs of the miserable wife and mother, the cries of the children, the wretched hut with its few broken pieces of furniture, the snow patches on the floor, the dirty windows, the august dying of humanity in so commonplace and for-granted a manner,—all this filled Stuart's heart as he came down into the brilliant rooms, decorated with their garlands and bouquets of expensive flowers, and perfumed with that refinement which wealth cunningly spent knows so well how to produce.

The guests came, dressed in the latest and best that money can afford. The conversation was charming and agreeable. To hear these men and women talk a stranger never could have guessed that there was such a thing as suffering in all the world. The music was about love and flowers and beauty and sentimental phrases that had no meaning, or a double one. The whole thing filled Stuart, for the first time in his life, with unspeakable loathing. It seemed to him like a dance in a cemetery, where the dancers might imagine they were waltzing over fragrant meadows dotted with white blossoms, when in reality it was on human graves they danced, black with the freshly laid earth of new-made burials. He never knew how he passed the evening. He sang with Miss Vasplaine when Louise requested it. He heard a great applause when they had finished. Una was dressed beautifully. She was handsome, with great

black eyes and much color, of the type of English girls. So different from Rhena, Stuart remembered thinking at one time during the evening. He found great difficulty in conversation. He had never been very apt at the slight nothings society knows so well how to exchange. To-night he wondered if the world was so happy and satisfied everywhere that men and women, made in the image of God, had no better way to spend their time than to meet for hours every week dressed in their best clothes, eating expensive and indigestible food, singing songs that did not contain one noble aspiration higher than a sickly sentiment, exchanging idiotic words thrown into sentences that had no throb of sacrifice or heroism or humanity in them, sitting at little tables and playing cards by the hour with a persistence and repetition never shown for any enduring needs of human suffering, and then going home, to sleep late next day, and get up to prepare for another evening in the way of new ways of arranging flowers, card tables, menus, and decorations *ad infinitum ad nauseum* after the manner of what pleased to call itself the "best society." Yes, the world must be getting on very smoothly; there is no real suffering, no inequality, no need of heroism or sacrifice, no call for using human speech in any better way than to exchange compliments, no use in trying to use time except to make money and enjoy spending it, where women smile and sing, and flowers give out their perfume, and dancing feet strike the polished floor to the music of the strings behind the palms in the alcove. For the world is society. What other world is there that calls for tears and groans, and sacrifices and crosses, and bloody sweat and agony? Strike up the

music faster! faster! "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Surely society must be right. The Aunt Royals and the Louises are certainly very proper and correct in their estimates of what constitutes the right thing to do. It cannot be that they are mistaken in this matter. Yet, if they are, it is possible the great judgment day will reveal it to them. After all, death and the judgment are two disagreeable facts. We beg society's pardon for mentioning them. Strike up the music faster! faster! Let us not think too much. Thinking leads to action, and action leads to sacrifice, and sacrifice is not agreeable.

At eleven o'clock most of the guests had gone. The hour had been fixed at eleven by Aunt Royal out of deference to the recent death in the family. The Vasplaines had frequently, when at the Duncans', sent their coachman home and walked back themselves. They had been trained to the English constitutional habit of walking.

"It's an elegant night; won't you walk over with us?" asked young Vasplaine as they stood in the hall looking out at the snow-covered hills, a vision of loveliness in the moonlight.

"Yes, let's go, Stuart!" cried Louise.

Aunt Royal gave her consent, so before Stuart knew it he was serving as escort to Una, as he could not very well have refused to do without making more of the refusal than it was worth. And Vasplaine went with Louise a little way behind.

As they reached the town square and began to cross it they heard the Salvation Army singing a hymn. The hall was lighted up and the meeting was still going on.

"Yes, Jesus left his home on high,
Out of love, out of love;
To suffer death for you and I,
Out of love, out of love;
Our sinful sins were on him rolled,
Oh, look, poor sinner, and behold!
He shed this precious blood we're told,
Out of love, out of love.

"He had nowhere his head to lay,
Out of love, out of love;
He walked the streets by night and day,
Out of love, out of love;
Oh, sinner will you now begin,
Take up your cross and follow him?
He's promised he will take you in,
Out of love, out of love!

"Oh, sinner, will you stop and think
Of his love, of his love;
To have his hands and feet so torn,
Out of love, out of love;
Oh, will you come to him to-day,
And get your sins all washed away,
And walk with us the narrow way,
Filled with love, filled with love?"

The hymn was sung to the tune "What's the news?" It gave abundant opportunity for criticism as to its grammar, meter, and literary character, but it struck into Stuart's heart like a blazing contrast with the whole evening spent with society in its selfishness.

Just as he and Una reached the end of the diagonal in front of the hall, the door opened and some people came out. And as he stepped his foot on the curb with Una by his side, resplendent in all her healthful beauty, Rhena appeared on the threshold. They were but a few feet apart, and Rhena's eyes caught Stuart's for one brief glance and then rested on Una. Then the door was shut and Stuart and Una went on.

CHAPTER IX.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

IT was nearly half a mile from the Salvation Army Hall to the Vasplaines', and Stuart never knew what he said to Una as they walked on. Rhena's look as the door had opened revealed a part of the truth to Stuart. If Rhena had been in Una's place during that half mile, there would have been no question of his determination to decide his destiny at once. As it was, Una was at first very gay in her rallying questions and remarks, and then as she neared her home she grew quiet, and finally haughty and chilling in her whole attitude towards Stuart. She did not know all, but she guessed the state of Stuart's mind towards Rhena and she was piqued, if indeed a deeper feeling did not enter into her thought, at the sight of the indifference of her old playmate to the beauty and attractiveness he had once seemed to enjoy. She bade him good night abruptly and went in at once, leaving him standing somewhat awkwardly by the door waiting for Louise.

When Louise and Vasplaine finally appeared, Stuart moved down the steps and without waiting for Vasplaine to say good night he said, "Louise, we had better be going right back. Good night, Vasplaine."

"Good night! Good night, Louise," cried the young man; and he went up the steps at once and into the house.

For a few minutes, as the two walked back, neither said anything. Finally Stuart asked abruptly:—

“How long has Vasplaine been calling you ‘Louise’?”

“Ever since we were children,” replied Louise in a mocking tone. But she was very much excited and never looked so pretty in all her life.

“But not in that tone of voice,” replied Stuart. He looked at the face in the fur-trimmed hat.

Louise looked back at him with just the faintest indication of a sneer on her lips. “Hal asked me to marry him,” she said at last.

“And what did you tell him?” asked Stuart quietly.

“I told him I would.”

The two walked on in silence, broken only by the crisp sound of the dry snow under their feet.

“Do you love him, Louise?” Stuart asked gently.

“Oh, I like him well enough. He is”—

“Stop, Louise! I can’t bear to hear you speak that way of such a serious matter. Do you know what sort of a man Vasplaine is?”

Louise was at anger heat in a moment. She wrenched her arm from Stuart’s and spoke with a passion she really felt. “No! no! Do you think I spy out his habits? He’s as fast as most of the young men, I suppose. What difference does it make? What right have you to pass judgment on him?”

Stuart was staggered at first. Then he recovered himself and replied: “Louise, I love you. You are my sister. I speak as I do because of my knowledge, and I say to you that if you marry Hal Vasplaine you will be a miserable woman. Louise, listen to me!” Stuart went on, his love for his sister for the moment causing him to

forget his own condition. "This man who has asked you to marry him is—O Louise, he will wreck your life! He is"—

"You need not say any more," interrupted Louise coldly. "I have promised to marry him. I like him. I believe I love him even, since your brutal attack on him behind his back. You claim the privilege of marrying beneath you. Let me do the same, if that is what you call it."

Stuart reeled almost as if he had been struck. He had been standing facing Louise since she took her arm from his. He passed his hand across his eyes, and then in a low tone he said:—

"Let us go on. We shall never understand each other."

Louise without a word took his arm again and they went on in silence. By the time they reached the town square most of the lights were out, except in the houses where the sick and dying lay. Everything was wrapped in the quiet of a still winter night. The Salvation Army Hall looked cold and bleak, its unpainted siding black with age. There was a light shining from Rhena's room. Their way led right past the house. Stuart trembled as he went by. He feared Louise might say something.

She did not, however, and neither spoke a word until they reached home.

Aunt Royal was still up and waiting for them. "You must have walked fast," she said, looking keenly at them both.

"We did," replied Stuart; "it is a very cold night."

He went into the library where there was an open

fire burning in the grate. The rooms were still heavy with the perfume of roses and carnations.

Aunt Royal and Louise followed him, after Louise had said a few words to her aunt. Aunt Royal was as excited as she ever allowed herself to be.

"Louise tells me you object to her marrying young Vasplaine," she said, confronting Stuart abruptly.

Stuart was surprised. He did not think Louise would mention the matter to her aunt. But Louise was thoroughly angry, and small natures like hers are never satisfied to wait long before expressing resentment. It was a very natural thing for her to confide at once in her aunt, being sure in this instance of her perfect sympathy.

"Yes, I do object," replied Stuart firmly; he looked straight into his aunt's face.

"On what grounds?"

"The character of the man," answered Stuart quietly.

"His character! Do you know that the Vasplaines have held the very highest position in the best society for several generations? Has not young Vasplaine been received everywhere in society where you or Louise have been?"

"It is possible that society may have more regard for wealth and a family name than for the little consideration of character and morals. I have heard sometimes that that is the case," said Stuart with a sad smile.

"Why have you allowed the Vasplaines to come into the house then, if they are such dreadful people?" asked Louise as she sat in one of the deep easy-chairs, with her feet out towards the fire.

Stuart did not reply. He was distracted by the events of the evening. He realized that his home life

was disturbed by the conflicting factors which necessarily entered it with all his newer ideas and definitions of life. Nothing could be more certain than the fact that henceforth the lives of his sister and Aunt Royal lay in directly opposite ways from his. He felt the needless irritation of the present discussion and longed to escape from it.

Louise, however, had no intention of letting Stuart go without suffering from a blow she knew so well how to inflict. "Aunt, I told Stuart he ought not to object to my choice if I didn't object to his. I don't think, though, that we shall be disgraced by a Salvation Army alliance in the family. Miss Dwight was presented to Una and her escort this evening, and by the appearance of her face it was easy to see she thought them a very handsome couple."

Stuart clinched his hands tightly as he stood with his back to the fire. The old passion rose in him to its highest point, and nothing but the grace of God kept it from bursting out into a torrent such as in the other days had more than once terrified Louise, reckless as she was in provoking it.

There was a deep silence in the heavily perfumed room. Stuart drew a long breath. Then he looked fearlessly into Aunt Royal's eyes, and with a sudden movement he stood close by his sister.

"Louise," he said, and at first his voice was calm, even loving, "you do not know how you hurt me. I expect to ask Miss Dwight to be my wife, but I will never subject her to the humiliation of living under the roof of a house where"—

He broke off abruptly and went out of the room. He

felt unable to finish calmly. Aunt Royal and Louise sat up quite late talking over the whole matter. It is not necessary to enter into it. The whole situation was becoming unbearable so far as Stuart was concerned, so the two women agreed.

"What if Stuart marries her, and brings her home here?" Aunt Royal would say.

"Then I shall leave the house; but I don't believe Rhena Dwight will ever marry him," Louise would reply. And there the matter rested for the time being, in the thought of the women.

The next morning Stuart did not appear at breakfast. He left word that he had very important business at the office and could not wait for the late meal to which Aunt Royal and Louise were in the habit of sitting down.

He had reached a point in his feelings where he felt the necessity of telling Rhena all. What Louise had said about that chance meeting at the hall disturbed him seriously. But the great question with him now was to know the truth from Rhena herself.

He spent the forenoon at the office. There was plenty to do. The fever and the want on the part of the miners' families were grim factors now in all Champion. The other ranges were fast feeling the effects of the double scourge of sickness and suffering. Scores of the miners' children were dying daily. To meet the emergency Stuart used his money lavishly. Everything in the way of medicines and nurses' supplies went out of the office in large quantities. He took a melancholy pleasure in spending his money this way. He could at least relieve some pain, lessen some anguish. It was a drop

only in the great ocean of the misery, but he had some satisfaction in contributing that much.

A little after noon word came to him that the child in the cabin at the end of Cornish town was dying. Stuart had no particular reason for going up there more than to any other cabin where other children were dying, but somehow he felt drawn in that direction, and about two o'clock he drove up the narrow wagon road and left his horse and cutter at the same place where he had stopped the night he had found Rhena.

He walked on up the path over the trodden snow thinking of that night. The air was crisp and the sky clear. The whole town behind him lay in its setting of snow-dressed hills, beautiful as a picture painted by a master, giving no outward sign of the anguish and sorrow that beat within the homes of the miners below.

He knocked gently at the cabin door, and Rhena opened it. She colored faintly at sight of him, but without a word beckoned him to enter.

The doctor was kneeling by the bed. It was a child, a little girl, only ten years old, who was dying. Stuart went and stood at the end of the rude bed. Rhena seated herself close by the doctor. The father of the child was helpless from an accident. He lay in the next room. The mother was kneeling by the side of the doctor.

"Is she—is she going—now—doctor? Don't say so. She be young to go!" cried the mother as she leaned over the bed and looked into the wasted face there.

"Yes, she's going. She will soon be out of suffering," replied the doctor very, very gently. No one was ever more gentle than Dr. Saxon in the presence of the

last enemy. He never relaxed his efforts until the last second of life. He looked death in the face with a frown; that was a part of his rough, abrupt character. But he looked the dying and the mourning in the face with the look of a compassionate angel.

Very fast the last great change grew now. The father cried out from the other room that he wanted to see his little girl once more. Stuart offered to bring him in. The doctor nodded, and Stuart went in where the man lay, and with Rhena's help succeeded in getting him into the other room and propped up in a chair where he could see the child. Great tears rolled over his rough, coarse face as he sat there. It was not very long. The doctor made a movement as he held the slender wrist. The eyes opened full on the father as he looked. There was a faint smile. It crossed the face as the sunlight, on a day of low dying clouds when the wind is blowing hard, crosses a meadow. It was gone, and the gray shadow followed fast after. The form stiffened, there was a sigh, another, and that was all. The doctor laid the little hand down and said, "She is gone." He turned his face away from the mother, and Stuart was startled at the look. It was as if Saxon had seen the death he was continually fighting, and was enraged at the victory won against his human skill. But he turned again to the mother, who had, after the manner of women among the miners, flung herself over the bed with great shrieks and cries, and lifting her up he half led, half carried her into the other room and laid her down sobbing and groaning on an old couch there. And Stuart could have sworn the doctor's face was as beautiful as mercy, and as full of blessing as mortal

man's can ever be. When he came back, after performing his office for the dead, the doctor went away. Those were days when sleep and rest were strangers to him. He never fully recovered from the terrible strain of that winter.

Rhena remained a little while to do what she could, and Stuart sent a boy, who had come up from a neighbor's, down for the undertaker, and promised all in his power. When Rhena went out, he went with her, and they were soon walking together over the very trail where Stuart had started out the night of Rhena's fall. She had other houses in Cornish town to visit, and needed to save time by the short cut which the upper trail afforded.

Stuart had not asked if he might go with her, and she had neither assented to his company nor rejected it. He had forgotten all about his horse and cutter down the other path. She seemed passive and thoughtful. The scene they had just witnessed affected them both deeply. It was not an unusual sight these days with either, but death never lost its majesty to Stuart, and Rhena was never more exalted in her feeling than in the presence of the great enemy.

There was hardly room in the trail most of the way for two persons. Stuart walked behind her. They were silent for the most part, except a question or two about different sick people, until they reached the big stump in the middle of the trail, the other side of which Stuart had found Rhena lying.

She turned her face a little as she was about to walk around the old landmark, and Stuart spoke to her. He was very pale and trembled. It seemed to him that a

great crisis had come for him. When he had spoken the first word he at once became more master of himself.

"Miss Dwight, I wish to tell you something. Will you allow me to say what I have felt I must say for a long time?"

Rhena looked startled. Her lip trembled. She seemed unable to answer.

Stuart went on. Now that he had made up his mind, he was like his father in the determination that drove him to his purpose with an iron energy that possessed his whole positive nature.

"I have been loving you almost from the first moment I saw you. You must have known it from my manner. I am a poor actor. I have not been able to conceal much, even if I had wished to. But my life has been transformed by all this. I have reached the place where I can no longer be silent. I know that I love you as a man should love the woman whom he asks with all the reverence and joy possible to him to be his wife."

He had spoken, and it was not what he had once thought he might have said. But he was not prepared for the effect of his declaration upon Rhena.

She was dressed as usual in her Salvation Army costume. The face in the army bonnet of blue, with its plain ribbons, was typical of the army faces seen everywhere. And yet, while Stuart was speaking, and all through the rest of the interview between them, he thought, with a certain bewilderment, that it was no longer the Salvation Army girl who stood facing him, but the society woman, Miss Rhena Dwight, daughter of Allen Dwight, the millionaire of New York. And yet she was, in still another way, removed from him by

the very circumstances of her army connections. Rhena was very pale as she spoke.

"Mr. Duncan," she said as she leaned back with one hand on the stump as if for support, "can you speak to me—tell me—this—after what I saw last night—after"—

"What!" cried Stuart, the color rushing to his face, "do you mean your seeing me with Miss Vasplaine? We have been old friends. We were boy and girl together. I was simply going home with her from a social gathering at my house. She is nothing to me but an acquaintance."

"I have been told that you were engaged," said Rhena after a slight pause.

"Who told you that?" cried Stuart impulsively. He stepped near Rhena.

"Your sister!" Rhena spoke calmly, looking straight at Stuart; but she was still very pale.

"Louise? She deceived you. It is not true. I never had a thought of Miss Vasplaine except that of a friend, an old acquaintance. Do you believe me when I say so?" Stuart spoke straight on and waited her answer steadily.

"Yes, I believe you," said Rhena quietly.

Stuart's heart leaped at the answer.

"Then you believe me when I say I love you? You"—

"Yes; I believe—I think you are a true man, but what you ask is impossible."

Stuart controlled himself. He felt that whatever the crisis might be which now faced him, he must be master of himself. It began to grow upon him that per-

haps he had not yet won the love of this rarely strong and beautiful woman, as it should be his.

"Why impossible?" he asked with a gentleness and calmness that surprised himself.

"We live in separate worlds," replied Rhena with an answering calmness that was possibly as surprising to her. "I have cut myself purposely and for always from the life I once lived. I have no wish to re-enter it. I have chosen my life work. It is a work so different from that of society and the world of which you are a part that to go back to your world would be to turn traitor to all my deepest and best convictions. It is impossible that I should be again as I once was."

Stuart did not reply at once. He looked off over the valley beyond the town to his own house as it stood there on the slope of the hill, palatial in its form and size.

"But I am not really in that world any more. The cause of humanity is my cause now. Do you condemn me to separation from you because I am what I am outwardly? I loathe the forms and selfishness and heartlessness of society as deeply as you do. I would give anything to be other than I am at this moment. If it is simply that which keeps you from"—

He could not finish. It was significant to her that he had not ventured to ask her if she loved him. Neither had he yet spoken her first name. He was a man of rare purpose and power in the emergency that he now faced. He would not expect what was perhaps not yet in her power to give. She was moved deeply. When she spoke again, Stuart had at first a gleam of hope.

"I believe you see the cause of humanity as I see it, Mr. Duncan. I have believed it since that night in the

hall when you told me the story of your conversion. It was so like my own experience that I was startled by it. I went home from a gay party a few years ago. I was awakened by a voice. I saw and heard the divine messenger. I went out from my father's house the next day, an outcast from kin and friends; and I have never regretted it. But the gulf between you and me is a deep one, even with this common experience. If I were to become your wife,"—Rhena spoke the word with difficulty,—“it would be at the expense of the life of service I have chosen. It would be”—

She broke off as if afraid to trust her voice. Stuart would not even then take advantage of her emotion to look at her. His gaze was still down the valley.

“Is our Christian faith nothing as a common basis for a common work together? Can we not do more thus than to go our own ways alone?” he asked; and his heart was hungry for the love of her, and still he would not take what she did not yet have to give.

Rhena answered quietly: “I cannot. It is not for me to thank you for the greatest honor a good man can give a woman. I am unworthy of it.”

“No! no!” Stuart cried at last, turning to her. “I love you. Let me say it even if it may be for the last time.” And then he did what he had not thought of doing when he began. But he faced the possibility of an answering love in this woman, and he longed for her too much to leave the matter without fully showing her his heart.

He took Rhena's glove from his pocket, the glove he had picked up on the trail that night. “See!” he cried, as he showed it to her. “I passed along this path one

night, and it was a night of great beauty to me. I found you lying over there close by the mouth of that pit. I caught you up and carried you down to safety. And for a little while you were mine in my heart's thought, and you could not say me nay." His voice broke in a sob. A man can sob only under certain emotions. Stuart had never felt that before.

As for Rhena, she caught her breath and then stood pale and still. "They told me Dr. Saxon brought me in. Why did they not tell me the truth? Why did he not tell me? I owe you my life?"

It was both a question and a statement. Stuart would not even now anticipate the love that might yet be his. He stood there facing her, silent after that one outburst. At last he said gently, "I would like to keep the glove, may I?"

She did not answer him. He put the glove back in his pocket. She was very, very pale.

He said one more word: "You believe I love you?"

"Yes, I believe it," she answered, in a very low voice.

"I shall always love you," he said. He took off his hat. The act was one of reverence. "Some time, when I have won your love, as I know I have not yet, I shall speak again," he added slowly. And then he turned and went back over the trail, never once looking behind. If he had—

When he disappeared behind a clump of firs, Rhena kneeled down by the old stump and laid her head upon it, and her prayer was very much like the prayer of that night when Louise had called upon her. After a while she rose and went down the trail. But she was not the same woman. Her heart was shaken for the first time

in her life by the love of a great and good man. Ah! it is possible if he had said to her, "Rhena!" she might have said, "Stuart!" and given him all. It was dangerous for her to think of him. She felt as never before. And then the glove, the knowledge of her safety due to him,—she trembled. There were times in her feeling when if Stuart had come back she would have said to him, "I love you. Let us go on our way through life together!" And she went on into the next cottage, a look in her eyes that was new to them, and an emotion in her heart that she could not suppress.

As for Stuart, he went down into Champion with a feeling that was not that of defeat or discouragement. It had been a crisis with him. He had at last spoken. He had nothing to regret in all he had said. And in spite of the fact that his answer had been No, something told him it was not final. He was the last man in the world to try to argue the woman he loved into loving him. He was not and could not be a pleading suitor for the heart of this woman of all persons in the world. He said to himself the time would come, although he did not attempt to picture when or how, when she would be his as he wanted her to be. With that great thought burning in him, he entered upon one of the busiest and most significant weeks of his life.

In the first place, when Sunday came he joined the church. He had already, two weeks before, gone into the preparatory meeting with Andrew and there recited his experience. It seemed the most necessary act in the world that he should identify himself openly and boldly with other Christians, in the organization which Christ loved. There was not a moment's hesitation in Stuart's

mind about the duty and privilege of church membership. That was a notable day in his life when Andrew asked him to rise and give assent to the church covenant.

The news that Stuart Duncan was going to join the church was interesting enough to call out a large part of the population of Champion. Andrew had never seen such a congregation. St. John's was crowded, very largely with the miners and their families. Stuart was the only person received at this communion. When he rose at Andrew's invitation, his face was calm and even beautiful. It was a splendid sight to see these two men facing each other at the communion service. When Stuart kneeled to receive the baptism, Andrew's voice trembled for a second over the words, "I baptize thee, Stuart, my brother, disciple of Jesus," and many an eye in the audience moistened. When the bread was passed, Stuart received it from one of the miners who had worked in Champion mines ever since Stuart was a boy. He was a deacon in St. John's, and Stuart never forgot the look on the old man's face as he handed the plate in at the end of the pew. More than half Andrew's membership were Cornish men. It was a day long remembered by them.

And to Stuart there came also, as he partook for the first time of the elements, a new and serious thought of the fellowship he had begun with these men, nearly all of whom had been in his father's employ. It was true, they were of the rudest, most uneducated sort. Their type of Christianity as church members was not very exalted. They were at this very moment engaged in a method of struggle against capital which was contrary to all Stuart's real convictions, but he had reached a point

where he looked upon the struggle from a different basis. The men in the church were for the most part prayerful, honest, and, above all, generous with what they possessed. Stuart did not know it, but Deacon Sam Penryck, who passed the bread and wine, had that very morning given one of the suffering families in Cornish town a third of his own savings which he had stored up for the winter to take him through the strike. But it was not about the type of Christianity that Stuart was thinking as he sat there. It was about his relations with these men with whom he was now associated as a member of the body of Christ. If he had been growing more and more to believe that he was his brother's keeper ever since the death of his father, much more now, especially since his conversion and this day's communion. Andrew's prayer touched on that. The service was very impressive.

At its close Stuart asked Andrew if he might say a word, and very simply but strongly he stated his Christian faith and asked for the prayers of the church that strength and wisdom might be given him to live the true life of a disciple. His words, as he stood there in all the strength and glory of his young manhood, touched the men deeply. They did not show it much, but they felt it and talked of it on their way home. Such a scene had not been known in Champion in their lifetime.

In spite of all this, and the tremendous hold that Stuart was obtaining over the men, the Union held for its original terms, and showed no signs of weakening. The Salvation Army still continued to exercise its restraining influence over the majority, although the drinking was increasing. Almost the only hope Stuart

had now was that the Cleveland owners would be compelled to yield before the winter was over, owing to the demand for ore which for the last weeks had been increasing. He had little expectation that the full demand of the miners would be granted, for he remembered that in the history of strikes very few large strikes had ever been successful. But he hoped the owners might make such concessions that the Union would agree to go back on a large rise in previous wages.

So the week following communion Sunday opened with special meaning to Stuart. It was a memorable week for Champion. The fever epidemic had reached its height. Most of its victims were children. The number of daily deaths was appalling. Andrew, Eric, the doctor, the nurses, Rhena and Stuart, with all the available help from the Christian people in the town, were battling with the enemy with all the might of skill and the exercise of all that money and watchfulness could accomplish.

Stuart and Rhena had met several times that week. Nearly always it was by the side of some dead or dying child. They said little. Each seemed to be waiting for something. Rhena was worn and thin, but there had come into her eyes a look she dared not let Stuart see. The winter had its influence in addition to all this to repress and bear down the hearts of the people. Never had such snowdrifts been known in Champion, or such severe cold. The nights set in with bitter winds sweeping down the hills, and after the evening train had plowed its way out of the station on its dreary trip westward, Champion seemed to be abandoned by God and man; all connection with the outer world seemed cut off,

the iron hills shut down hard and close about the town, and the long, terrible night began—a night of agony to those who lived and those who died. The date of the great strike and the great fever will never be forgotten by the children who were left untouched by the grim Death.

One night that week Stuart had come home very late, thoroughly exhausted with the frost chill in his bones, the benumbing sense of his responsibility weighing him down, and his heart crying out, "O Lord, how long! how long!" He had gone up to his room and had sunk into a heavy sleep. He wakened between two and three o'clock with a feeling of something wrong. It was so pressing that he rose and dressed and went to the window that looked out on the town. The night was one of the bitterest ever known. The wind was blowing an icy gale through the valley. Even the Duncan mansion, warmed as it was with the best and most expensive apparatus, felt the shock of the almost solid cold that struck through everything.

Suddenly Stuart saw a light in the lower end of Cornish town. The miners' houses or cabins there were built for the most part of logs or slabs from the mill. They were crowded very close together at the lower part of the town. As he looked, the light flamed up higher, and his heart bounded as he realized that one of the cabins was on fire. The horror of it as he considered what such an accident meant on such a night stupefied him, but only for a second. The next instant he was downstairs, had flung himself into his overcoat, was out of the house and speeding down the road.

When he reached the square, lights were springing up

in the windows all about. The alarm had reached the people and they were rising. By the time he reached Cornish town half a dozen houses were blazing. The miners had turned out in a body and were fighting the fire like fiends, but the intense cold, the high wind, and the nearness of the cabins to one another at this part of the settlement made the fight a most hopeless one.

Stuart ordered all the sick and aged to be carried out of the houses nearest the fire, and he himself worked like ten men. There was no water available. The engine and hose companies had made a desperate effort to reach the settlement, but the tremendous drifts and the condition of the roads made it impossible. The snow itself was the only weapon within reach. It was piled over the low-roofed cabins by the excited miners, who saved some houses on the edges by this novel method. But the wind swept everything before it in the center of the fire, and at last all that the men tried to do was to rescue the inmates.

Stuart was helping some one carry a dying child out of a cabin, when a great blazing timber was caught up by the hurricane, and flung, as if by some giant hand, right over the couch on which the child was lying, and struck Stuart, knocking him off his feet and causing the man who was carrying the other end of the burden to stagger and fall. Stuart did not rise. At that moment Dr. Saxon was coming out of the adjoining cabin. The man who had been helping Stuart rose and yelled for the doctor. He came over and picked up Stuart as if he had been a little boy, and carried him clear down the path to Eric's cottage. The miners said afterwards that Saxon's face, as it blazed in the light of that horrible fire, was

the face of one who looked both death and hell in the countenance, and defied them to steal away his beloved.

Eric's cottage was out of the line of the wind and fire that night. The doctor laid Stuart down. As he did so, a woman rushed into the cottage and flung herself down by the side of the body. It was Rhena, and she cried as she kneeled there: "Stuart! Stuart! Do you know me! I love you! O doctor, he is not dead! He is not, is he? Oh, how I love him! I love him!"

"At this rate," quoth Dr. Saxon grimly, "we shall have to put up another band stand in the square!" But he looked at Stuart as he lay there, deaf to all those words of love from the woman whose heart was now his, and the doctor's look was very stern and grave.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONFERENCE.

IT was two weeks after the fire and the accident to Stuart. Eric was sitting by the bed, for Stuart was still in Eric's cottage. His accident had been so serious that there had been no thought of his removal. During the anxious days and nights Eric had hardly left Stuart's side. Andrew had begged to be allowed to watch, but Eric had insisted upon his prior right and had refused to give way to any one else.

There was another watcher, who, more than Andrew, regarded Eric jealously, and that was a woman who stole into the cottage often with the doctor's coming, and remained, dry-eyed and pale, with the heart's hunger of love staring out of great eyes that burned over Stuart, as if by very force of compelling affection they would rouse him into knowledge and life again. Rhena did not try to hide the feeling she now had. The doctor came in quietly that day while Eric was sitting asleep at the side of Stuart, exhausted by his great vigil, and found Rhena on her knees praying. The intensity of her desire for Stuart's life broke out into an audible petition.

"O Lord, my God, save him! What has he done to die? Oh, how can I say, 'Thy will be done'? I never loved him before. Spare him, God of all goodness! He is so needed in thy world! Surely there are others who

would be less—God! what am I saying? But he is my lover! And he does not know that I love him!”

“Beg pardon!” interrupted the doctor; “but you’re mistaken about that. He knows it perfectly well. Just tell him four or five times more, if you think it is necessary.”

Rhena turned her head towards Stuart. He lay there with his eyes open, for the first time in days, really conscious, and with a smile on his face which was heaven to her. She simply turned on her knees and bowed her head over Stuart’s hand and put her lips to it, and then, to the doctor’s surprise she fell over and fainted.

“It beats all creation what these women can spring in the way of surprises on a man!” said the doctor as he picked Rhena up and carried her over to a couch at the other end of the room.

Eric had started out of his doze and Stuart had shut his eyes again, lapsing into his former stupor, but still with a smile on his lips. “But if any lass has a right to faint, this one has. Are you going to tumble off again, ma’am?” he asked as Rhena began to come to. “You can, if you want to. Do you want to cry? Come! that’s a good girl! Cry a little. It’ll do us all good. Want a handkerchief? Here’s mine.”

Rhena sat up suddenly and seized Saxon’s hand. “O doctor, he will get well, won’t he? He is better? There is hope? He knew me for a moment! You do believe my prayer will be answered?”

Rhena was crying softly. She was broken and nervous with the great strain of the last two weeks.

“I’ve heard worse prayers get attended to,” replied the doctor shortly.

"But do you think—oh, doctor, it is death to me to think of—tell me, what do you fear? Is he—will he live?"

The doctor shut his lips tight. Rhena watched him with her hands clinched hard over his. She did not know it, but her slim fingers hurt even the doctor's rugged, knotty fists. Finally he answered her. "I think, yes, I am quite sure, now that he knows that you care for him a little, there is a fighting chance."

"Care for him a little!" replied Rhena with a smile that melted the doctor completely. "Doctor, were you ever in love?"

"No," replied the doctor; "but if I was, I'd have to put up still another band stand in the square. One apiece wouldn't be too much for three such fools as you and Stuart and me."

"What's that nonsense he's talking?" asked Eric, coming over to the end of the room where they were.

"It was not nonsense," said Rhena with more color in her face than it had seen since the day Stuart had first spoken to her. She went over to the side of Stuart and sat down there watching him. She had a great hope now. The doctor also told the truth. And indeed he afterwards said, nothing but love brought Stuart out alive.

"I've heard that people who were in love could live on nothing," the doctor said, "but I do believe if Stuart hadn't come to himself long enough that day to hear that little prayer, I'd 'a' had two funerals on my hands pretty quick. Well, I never understood these women. There she was one minute as limp as a dead fish, and the next she was as lively as a Salvation Army tambourine.

If I could get this article they call love fixed up in a prescription, and deal it out in severe cases, I believe it would do more good than all the microbe killers on earth."

Those were wonderful days when Stuart was declared out of danger. Andrew celebrated by bringing over his choicest blossoms. He ranged two pots of roses on a table where Stuart could see them, and laid a beautiful white carnation on the bed within reach of Stuart's fingers.

"It's the only one I've been able to get this winter, Stuart. Isn't a beauty? It's a new variety. Do you know what I have called it? I took the liberty to call it the 'Rhena Dwight.'"

When Rhena came in a few minutes after, Andrew and Eric pretended to be busy talking at the other end of the room.

Stuart picked up the carnation and spoke feebly, but the light of life was in his eyes. "This blossom is called the Rhena Dwight, so Andrew says. Will you take it because of the love I bear you?"

Rhena took the flower and kissed it. Then she shyly placed the blossom against Stuart's lips. Then she laid it down again in his hand.

"No," she said, "you keep the Rhena Dwight for the love I have for you."

Is it any wonder Stuart grew well with great rapidity after that?

In a week he was almost well. He was able to take part in the discussions which forced themselves into that little room in spite of all Eric could do. There had been three weeks almost a blank to Stuart, but full of horror

and misery for the miners on all the ranges. The fire that dreadful night had made three or four hundred people homeless. The deaths from fever had lessened some in Champion, but at De Mott the daily mortality had increased. But most of the suffering came from lack of clothing and fuel and food. The winter had continued with terrible severity. And still the Union held out with remarkable stubbornness, although the week of Stuart's convalescence there was a rumor that a break would come very soon. The Union had reached its limit of ability to help in a financial way long before this.

Stuart came back to strength and new vitality with all the force of the old problem intensified as he realized what the three weeks had added to it. He was glorified with the love of Rhena, now wholly his, but he knew that for nothing did she love him more than for his desire to try to solve the human problem, as it touched both their lives in Champion. With all the added warmth and enthusiasm of her great-hearted wisdom he now set himself to the duty before him. It was not alone his desire that Rhena should be one of the company when Eric and Andrew came in to talk over matters. The other men had learned that woman's wit very often supplies the necessary factor in a solution of practical relief, and Rhena took her place with them as indispensable to their councils henceforth.

"Something has got to be done soon for the people who lost everything in the fire," said Andrew. The little group of four were in Eric's room Stuart on the couch, Rhena sitting near the end of it, Eric pacing the room, his dark eyes restless and burning.

"I understand they have all been comfortably cared

for. But I don't see, myself, what Champion people have been able to do for them in the way of housing them," said Stuart, looking at Andrew, upon whom a large share of the work of relief had fallen during Stuart's unconscious condition.

"Heaven knows how all of them have been cared for. The Salvation Army Hall has been turned into barracks, and Miss Rhena here knows how much the Army has done."

"It has done very little in comparison with what it would like to do," said Rhena sadly.

"Do you know what it would like to do?" asked Stuart, who was only just beginning to comprehend how great and pressing was the need since the fire and three weeks more of the strike.

"I'm afraid it's not much use for me to say," answered Rhena with added sadness.

"You forget," answered Stuart. "What is all my money for? Why have you not been spending it all this time?" he asked almost fiercely, turning to Eric, who still paced the room and who had not yet spoken.

"I've spent plenty of other people's money, in my mind," answered Eric as bitterly as he ever spoke. "But I never spent it in reality; and when it comes to the suffering we face now, I wouldn't know where to stop. What right have people to go on wasting God's property so wickedly while there is so much suffering?"

He looked at Andrew as he spoke; and Andrew, who seldom made a retort of any kind, replied:—

"Ask the devil; he knows more about it than I do."

"And then there is the Church," continued Eric, who was irritable and nervous on this occasion, for his long

watching with Stuart had been a great strain on him; "what is it doing in comparison with what it ought to do? Stuart, you asked me quite awhile ago why I joined the Salvation Army. I'll tell you why. There was nowhere else I could go for the religious expression of my life. St. John's Church is a curious mixture of workingmen and tradesmen, and I'm not saying anything of its aristocracy, for it hasn't any, but if I do say it (and I am sorry to have to say it) the whole object of the church before Andrew came here to it, seemed to be to meet together for meetings which gave occasion for a good deal of feeling and emotion, but never realized anything of a practical nature in helping to relieve the pressure of the physical needs of men. The whole thing evaporated in feeling and psalm-singing and prayers that never really got much outside the walls of the vestry. I'm not crying down the Christian lives of the church members. There are hundreds of them better than I am. But the expression of their Christianity through the structure of the Church seemed to me almost nothing. One may be just as strong as another, but if one of them is using a dull axe and the other one a sharp axe to cut down a tree, the strength of the two men is not being equally spent so far as getting results goes, and the man with the sharp tool will do the best work, not because he has more muscle, but a better axe. It came upon me with the force of a conversion that I never could do much through the church as an instrument. That's the reason I went into Salvation Army. It represented the sacrificial spirit of Christianity to me a hundred times where the church did not represent it at all. Take the church of St. Peter here in Champion. It is always

spoken of in the papers as the most fashionable church in town. Think of that! So the News Crier stated in giving the account of its annual meeting. What do those people know of sacrifice, or of the spirit of Christ, who gave up all his riches to become poor for the sake of dying humanity? I'm sitting in judgment on them and I shall sometime be called to account for doing it; but if I was a Catholic, I'd be willing to sit on the hottest fire in purgatory to say what I think about an 'aristocratic church.' And this one here in Champion is only one out of thousands all over the country. What is the Church as an institution doing to obey the command of Christ, to deny itself, take up its cross, forsake its ease and pleasure, and follow him?"

Again Eric turned in his walk and confronted Andrew. Stuart and Rhena watched him almost sorrowfully, after listening to Eric's outburst. Over Andrew's usually jolly, good-natured face crept a gray shadow of seriousness that showed how deeply Eric's sharp condemnation had pierced.

"Your question is larger than any answer I can make without taking up hours of discussion," he said at last, speaking calmly, but with evident self-control over a possible fury of feeling. "The Church to-day contains some of the noblest and some of the meanest men and women. There is in the Church the highest, purest, most saintly devotion to Christ and his teaching, and at the same time there is alongside of it the most awful selfishness and love of ceremony, show, and hypocrisy. The scribes and Pharisees are just as much in evidence now as when they cried to Pilate, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' Long ago I came to the conclusion that the same

people would nail Jesus to the cross again if he appeared in this generation and denounced their hypocrisy and selfishness as he did before. At the same time, he would have a great army of disciples who would suffer martyrdom for his sake. I regard the Church of to-day as occupying a peculiar position in the world of struggle between different groups of men. There is a growing feeling on the part of many churches that a great revolution in methods and purpose is at hand, and that nothing will be so radically changed in spirit and purpose as the Church of Christ. The amount of relief for suffering that flows out of the organization we now have is no doubt enormous. Propose to any civilized community in this country that it wipe out its churches altogether, and the proposition would meet with instant objection even on the part of those who are most ready to denounce the Church for its uselessness. I am not attempting to answer your question in full, Eric. Of course if I did not believe in the Church,—I mean in its possibilities of sacrifice;—I would not work from it as a center. I would get out and work from some other basis. But this is my best reason for believing in the Church as a power for the world's redemptive uplift after all else has been said." Andrew paused, and the rest listened thoughtfully. "The Church is the only organization Jesus ever mentioned. He especially loved it. It was not any particular form or name that he loved, but the discipleship organized in love to one another and a common Master, going forward to conquer the world for God. And after the trials and false representations of Christ in the Church have had their day, after the aristocratic churches have died and the memory of their

pomps and fashion is no more, after the coldness and carelessness and superficial worldliness of the Church have had their time lived out, the true Church will survive the wreck of all this agonizing death in life, and be a universal representation of the crucified Lamb of God, giving its life for the needs of a suffering and dying race. 'I believe in the holy catholic Church'* in the sense that I believe it contains the leaven that is necessary to leaven the whole lump. Why, even the Salvation Army never would have had an existence if it had not been for the Church."

"Do you mean that the Church had grown so mean and useless that the army had to be organized to do what the Church ought to have done?" asked Eric with a smile.

"No; I mean, of course, that the Christian men and women who organized the army had their nurture and training in the Church. She was their mother. They went out from her home to do a work they never could have done if they had not been trained and taught at her feet."

"Is not the Salvation Army as much the Church as any other form of organization where Christian disciples get together in Christ's name?" asked Rhena.

"Yes, I think so," replied Andrew.

"I mean to prove it by joining both," said Stuart, looking at Rhena.

"You can't join the army without giving up your own wishes and obeying the orders of your superior officer," said Rhena slyly.

"It's one of the rules of the army also, I understand," added Andrew with a twinkle, "that a private cannot

*Meaning the Church universal.

even marry without asking the consent of the commanding officer. Isn't that so, Miss Rhena?"

"I've asked it and obtained it," said Stuart. "The commanding officer says, 'Get married as soon as you recover from your present illness.'"

"She doesn't either," said Rhena hastily. Then as Andrew and Eric began to laugh, she blushed and said, to hide the confusion, "We are getting away from our original question. Stuart wants to know how to spend his money. It seems too bad if we can't any of us tell him how."

"I can tell him how to use several thousands," said Eric, who, after expressing his own mind on the church question, was once more the calm, thoughtful, even attractive man he really was. Eric had great powers, but they were not developed.

"Well, go on!" cried Stuart.

"The miners need new houses in Cornish town. What could be a better way to invest ten or twenty thousand dollars than to put up a hundred substantial houses that would really be homes?"

"What do you think of that?" asked Stuart, turning naturally to Rhena.

"It ought to be done," she answered softly, "and a good deal more. I am not thinking of the houses alone, but of the men, women, and children who live in them. There is no doubt they have had all these years the most miserable quarters. What can be expected of a family living in a cabin of only three rooms at most? How much refinement and civilization can come out of such surroundings? Stuart, you must drain the settlement and"—

"I'll drain the whole neighborhood!" cried Stuart. "And the houses shall be built at once. Why have you let me lie here all this time like a useless thing when so much needed to be done?"

Just then Dr. Saxon came in. He entered as usual, the minute he had rapped a peculiar knock known by every one in Champion, stopping outside only long enough to say, "It's the doctor."

The minute he appeared, Stuart began to abuse him for not getting him well quicker.

"I'll never pay you, Doc., unless you give me something that will let me out of this in a day or two. Or else I'll sue you for malpractice!"

"If you do, I'll sue the company for half a million dollars' worth of practice done on the miners since the strike and the fire. I'm going to retire after this winter if I can law the company out of what they owe me. But you can get out again in a day or two. The only thing that ails you now is heart trouble, and I can't cure that. You are in a very dangerous condition."

The doctor looked at Rhena and so did Stuart, and then after a moment of sober thoughtfulness the doctor smiled. It was a rare smile and made his rugged, storm-beaten face almost handsome. He was already moving towards the door to go out. He was in a great hurry that morning, for a wonder, he said, and simply stepped in on his way up the hill to see how Stuart was.

"Stop him!" cried Stuart to Eric. "Say, doctor, don't go yet. We need your advice. We want your help in making plans for the relief"—

"Oh, get out for plans for relief! I have no sympathy with them! The more you give those ungrateful, obsti-

nate old—I tell you, Stuart, you'd better keep your money. You'll need it when you begin housekeeping. Every time when you go down town your wife will want you to bring home a mouse trap and a lemon squeezer, or a barrel of pepper or something. Eric, if you try to stop me, I'll throw you through the window."

The doctor rushed out of the door and slammed it shut. The next minute he opened it, and looking in, he said gravely, "If you mean to do anything worth while about the draining, or building new houses, I'll give you a hint or two when I get time."

The next minute he was gone, and Stuart could see from the little window a vision of Ajax and the cutter as they tore up the hill.

"I wonder if the doctor will ever get time?" said Andrew. "I wonder what he will do when he gets to the other country, where there is to be no more pain nor crying nor death!"

"I declare, it puzzles me to guess what he'll do. I can't imagine him sitting on the edge of a rose-colored cloud taking it easy," replied Stuart. "I have no doubt there will be some arrangements made for his special benefit."

"Do you think we shall all be as busy there as we are here?" asked Rhena.

"Of course," Andrew answered. "Only we shall have plenty of time to do things as we want. I love to believe that I can raise roses of all sorts and have, say, a thousand years to experiment on new varieties, without feeling all the time that I ought to be making that parish call or writing that sermon or getting ready for that committee meeting."

"You don't believe there will be roses in the other world, do you?" inquired Eric quizzically.

"I don't?" exclaimed Andrew. "What would heaven be without roses and little children?"

"I'm not quarreling with your idea. I like it," replied Eric. "I hope there will be roses there without the thorns. Meanwhile we are living in the town of Champion, where the thorns outnumber the roses two to one. If we make this little spot on earth more like heaven, perhaps we'll be in a condition to enjoy the other place better when our turn comes to go to it."

"There's no doubt of it!" Stuart spoke with an emphasis that meant a world of action. "As certain as the Lord raises me up from this weakness in body, I will render him an account of my stewardship. Eric, you and Andrew can arrange the details of this work. Our duty is imperative. It is as clear as light to me. Those houses shall be built as fast as money can do it. And the other cabins shall be torn down and new ones put up in their places."

"How about that hall dedicated to the interests of labor?" asked Eric, smiling.

"Up it goes, as soon as we can get at it. I don't like the idea of calling it a hall for labor interests. I tell you, Eric, the rich need preaching to more than the poor. They need to be taught their duties and privileges. The hall will be built, but it shall be called 'The Hall of Humanity. It shall be dedicated to the entire community, and whatever is said or preached or sung in it shall be for the union of men, for their good as members of the human family. Every unselfish, Christ-like word and deed we can think of shall be given a place

within its walls. Oh, I've done some thinking since I began to get well! But first to the house building. Rhena, you can help us in the details of this important work."

Stuart never spoke a truer word. Rhena entered into the plans for the building with all her enthusiasm. She outlined the most satisfactory and sensible arrangement for the structure of the new houses; and during the next few weeks she was the life of the project, her great common sense and practical knowledge of the needs of the occasion assisting Eric and Andrew wonderfully, as the entire work grew under their hands.

Two days after this conference in Eric's cottage Stuart was able to go home. The evening of the day he returned was the scene of a conversation between him and Aunt Royal and Louise that is necessary to relate. Both his aunt and Louise had been several times to see him while he was at Eric's. It was clear to Stuart that no course he could take on the lines now laid out by his new definition of life could possibly meet with the approval of these women.

The conversation started with a statement Stuart made concerning his coming marriage.

"We shall be married as soon as Miss Dwight can get ready." Stuart had reference to her Salvation Army duties and the work necessary to the building of the houses.

"I suppose she is ordering her trousseau from Paris? I should love to see a Salvation Army gown made after the latest European style," said Louise with a sneer.

"Do you expect to be married in the Army Hall?" asked Aunt Royal with a frigid look at her nephew.

"My wife," said Stuart with a distinctness that ignored all this, but made one point very plain, "will be the undisputed mistress of this house. She is the peer of any woman living in education, accomplishment, and grace; and she is the superior of most of them in her spiritual refinement and self-sacrifice."

"Are you going to bring her here?" asked Louise with a curious look.

"Where else should I bring the woman I marry?" asked Stuart, turning to Louise.

"I didn't know but that Miss Dwight would prefer to live in a humbler fashion after all her talks and prayers about giving up this and that and the other. But of course if she decides to enjoy the sinful luxuries of life after her roughing it in army halls, you know what I shall do?"

Stuart did not answer. Aunt Royal watched him closely.

"I shall simply leave, that is all," continued Louise. "I don't live under the same roof with Rhena Dwight as dictator over me."

Stuart was about to say something, but Louise interrupted him. "I shall be able to care for myself. You needn't plan for anything different, for I have made up my mind. Aunt Royal will let me stay with her until I am married. I shall be glad to go to New York, anyway. I'm getting tired of the winter up here, with all this gloom and sacrifice and suffering so prominent. So don't put off the happy wedding day on my account, Stuart."

"Louise, I want to speak to you alone a few minutes. Aunt," continued Stuart politely, but plainly, "will you kindly excuse me if I take Louise into the library?"

"Oh, by all means," replied Aunt Royal, who was outwardly cool and placid, but inwardly a raging fire.

So Louise went with Stuart, although she said at first she would not go. She was under his dominion when he exerted his will.

"Louise,"—Stuart stood facing the pretty countenance, and a look of pity and love crept over his own,—
"I cannot bear to think that we are going to have this misunderstanding to separate us. Cannot you and Miss Dwight be friends?"

"No, it is out of the question," replied Louise shortly. She was thinking of the lie she told Rhena, and she knew that no matter if Rhena was ready to forgive it, now that she was going to be Stuart's wife, there was a gulf of difference between them. And, besides, she was out of sympathy with all of Stuart's present plans of life.

"Then if that is out of the question, Louise, there is another matter I must speak of again. I refer to your promise to marry Vasplaine. Be patient with me when I tell you, Louise dear, that, out of the love I have for you, I would almost rather see you dead than married to that"—

"Is this what you called me in here for?" cried Louise furiously, raising her voice. "I will not listen to it. You are a coward to attack him so, behind his back."

"Louise," interrupted Stuart, who was deathly pale, "it is out of love for you that I speak. I forgive your misunderstanding of my motive," he added, as he heard Aunt Royal nearing the door. "If the time should ever come, dear, when you feel the need of my love, my heart and home will always be open to you."

How little, as he spoke, Stuart thought of the meaning of those words, even if he did look with some certainty into the future. Louise turned from him, and their interview ended. It was only one more part of the evidence, daily growing stronger in Stuart's mind, of the great difference between his old life and the new. He realized now, as he never had thought to know, the meaning of those words, "A man's foes shall be those of his own household." The division line had been drawn the minute he chose to follow Jesus Christ, and the separation of necessity had gone on widening between him and the old life, still represented by Louise and his aunt. He did not blind himself in the least as to the cause. It was very plain. He could not be a Christian and walk hand in hand with them, nor they with him; the two ways led in exactly opposite directions.

But all this was only a part of the testing of his manhood. He had a far more severe choice to make at the end of the week.

Matters were in this condition. The building of the new houses was going on with as much rapidity as circumstances would permit. A big storm had interrupted the workmen. The immense snows were a serious hindrance. Added to all the rest was the difficulty of getting workmen during the cold weather. The miners who had been burned out were quartered all over the town. The hotel had arranged for accommodation, Stuart providing all the expenses there. The Salvation Army did its share, and more too. But the discomfort and crowding and suffering were of such a nature, that even money, lavishly as Stuart was willing to use it, could not much more than provide a temporary and partial relief.

He was down at the Salvation Army Hall one afternoon at the close of the week, trying to make some arrangements for better accommodations. Rhena was at work with some of the women at the other end of the hall, when Eric came in hastily. He was followed in a few minutes by Andrew.

"News from De Mott is serious," said Eric. "The men down there are threatening to pull up the pumps again. They are at the end of their provisions and starving."

"I can't feed the entire mining country, Eric!" said Stuart a little sharply.

"I know it." Eric sat down on a bench and put his face between his hands. At once Stuart repented him of the sharp word.

"Forgive me, Eric. I spoke angrily. I will do all in my power."

"It isn't that," replied Eric in a muffled voice. "The men have refused to listen to me any longer and say they mean to act on their own account! My authority is all over!"

"Nonsense!" but Stuart saw that Eric spoke the truth.

"It's so. Eric spoke with bitterness. 'No one is quite so ungrateful as a mob of workingmen when it turns on its leaders. My day is over.'"

It was just at that moment that Andrew came in. "Have you heard the news?" he asked. "They say the De Mott men are going in a body to the Queen mine to pull up the pumps and then to the Royal and so on, until they have ruined every mine on the range. They have given the companies two hours to give in."

Stuart was very thoughtful. "If they do so serious a thing as that, it will lead to an appalling loss of life. The troops at Hancock have been kept in readiness by the Cleveland owners, who have been anticipating some such move. It is folly for the men to think the owners will yield at this late day to their demands."

"It will be the deathblow to labor and the working-man's cause for all time if they do as they say," said Eric with a groan. "And I am as helpless as a child. I"—Eric completely broke down and actually cried. He felt that his reign was over.

Andrew looked gravely at Stuart. The short winter day was fast drawing to an end. Stuart still stood there, thoughtfully looking at the bowed form of Eric.

"There is one man who still has great influence over all the miners in Champion and De Mott," said Andrew gently.

Stuart started. Over at the other end of the hall he could see Rhena. She had just left her task and was coming towards him. Life was very sweet to him now. Why should he risk it in a possible, yes, probable danger by going over to the scene of this new difficulty. Was he his brother's keeper?

"That one man is yourself," continued Andrew.

"You think I ought to go?" asked Stuart calmly.

"I cannot answer for you," Andrew made reply slowly.

"What are you talking about?" asked Rhena as she came up.

"Rhena," said Stuart, "it may be necessary for me to go to De Mott to-night. It looks now as if the strike had reached a crisis, and before morning something will

probably occur to change the situation that has held all winter."

Rhena looked steadily at the three men.

"You are keeping back something," she said at last.

"Yes!" exclaimed Eric, lifting his head. "The men at De Mott are going to pull up the Queen mine pumps. I've lost my influence over them. If Stuart goes over there to prevent the men, he will risk his life. I know the men when they are drunk are devils. They would kill any one, even Christ himself, if he went over there to-night. Don't let him go, Miss Dwight. It's almost sure death. He will only lose his life and do no good by it."

Rhena did not say a word. Stuart looked over at Andrew as if half hoping he would second Eric's request. But Andrew was silent. Then he turned towards Rhena again. He had never loved her so much as at that moment.

"Rhena," he said in a low tone, "I feel as if I ought to go over to De Mott. I am sure Eric exaggerates the danger. If I am the only man with enough influence to prevent an outbreak, I am in duty bound to exert it."

"No; don't go!" cried Rhena, and then she stopped. She had taken one step towards Stuart. He was not looking at her, but seemed to be hesitating for something.

She spoke again. "I would not have you a coward to please me. If you must go"—

"I must," replied Stuart. "God bless and keep you." He leaned over and kissed her, and without another word to either Andrew or Eric he stepped to the door and threw it open.

"I'll send over to the hotel barn for a horse!" cried Andrew. Just at that moment Dr. Saxon drove up

"He is just in time," said Stuart calmly, as if he had been expecting him.

He told the doctor in a few words that he must go to De Mott at once. The doctor understood.

"Get in, then! This means more gunshot wound practice for me maybe." He whispered to Rhena, who had come out to the side of the cutter, pale and trembling. "Don't you fear, lass. The Lord protects drunkards and fools when they don't know enough to stay at home nights. Whoa now, Ajax!" he yelled at his horse, just long enough to allow Stuart to say good-by to Rhena.

The next instant Stuart had leaped into the cutter, and Ajax was flying over the road to De Mott. Andrew and Eric and Rhena stood at the door of the hall watching.

Finally Rhena said, "Let us go inside and pray."

Andrew and Eric followed her, and Andrew comforted her as they went. But Eric sat down moodily and was silent; while Rhena and some of the other women and Andrew were praying together, he went softly out of the hall, and after looking around in the gathering dusk he finally started in a brisk walk and gradually increased it to a run. He followed the track of the doctor's cutter, and was soon running with all his speed over the De Mott road.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ORATOR.

WHEN Stuart and the doctor swept into De Mott after a fierce ride behind the foaming Ajax, they found almost the entire population gathered around the postoffice block, in which was a large hall used during the winter mostly for traveling show companies.

It was packed to-night with the miners. The Union was in session, and every man who could find a foothold inside was there. The rest were waiting outside to hear a final decision. Not a man of them but believed the result had already been determined, and that before morning every pump on the range would be pulled out and the companies would lose millions of dollars' worth of property in a few hours. It would be a grim revenge of labor over capital. It would strike capital at its most sensitive spot. It would be a real satisfaction for the great suffering and want of the winter. And many and many a hollowed-faced miner in the crowd around the hall was thinking of a little child lying dead under the snow in the great burial place on the slope of the range, and he grasped his stick tighter and cursed the rich in his palace of comfort that bitter night.

Stuart never felt more helpless. He looked at the faces around him, and his heart sank as he realized how great was the force of a mob bent on doing its own

pleasure. He felt as if any influence he might possess in Champion was an empty breath in De Mott. Surely Andrew had been mistaken when he said Stuart could influence such men as these at such a time as this.

He was roused from all this by the doctor, who spoke short and sharp.

"Now then! Let's make a break for the hall! We'll leave Ajax right here."

Stuart was astonished.

"They won't let us into the hall!"

"We'll see about that," replied the doctor.

He drove Ajax up in front of one of the drug stores where he was in the habit of stopping when he came to De Mott, and getting out of the cutter, with Stuart following with much wonder, he began to force his way to the hall door. As Stuart went on, he began to realize that there had been a mistake made by Andrew. If there was one man left who had real influence over the miners, it was not Stuart Duncan, but Dr. Saxon.

It was almost comical to see the changes that went over the miners' faces as the doctor shoved men this way and that in order to get near the hall. At first they swore, and threatened to do unspeakable damage for the rough treatment some one was giving them, but the minute they caught sight of the rugged, kindly face they were as polite and ready to make room as if he had been some high and mighty potentate, and they his royal subjects.

"Get out of the way there! Doctor, he be needed in the hall. Some one be hurt in there likely!" And a big Dane reached out and caught a miner, who was standing in front of the doctor, by the collar and pulled

him off his feet, as if he had been a dummy in a clothing store.

In this way the doctor, Stuart struggling in his wake, fought and had fought for him a way up to the hall door. Thirty years' absolute devotion to the great needs of the miners in De Mott as well as in Champion had endeared the doctor to every stolid, obstinate, dull, heavy-brained but warm-hearted man out of the five thousand, but even to-night he was privileged to go where wanted and no questions asked.

He was in the hall and Stuart behind him. It was contrary to Union rules, but to-night there was no such strict enforcement of regulations. The men had reached or were nearing a desperate resolve, and did not care much who knew it.

So the doctor, still silent as he had been from the time he started to make his way into the hall, went on through the dense crowd that blocked the aisles, and Stuart still crowded after him, his mind in a dream, his amazement at the doctor's action not yet relieved by a real inkling of his purpose.

They were on the platform, and the speaker had stopped to shake hands with the doctor, and then the doctor had asked in a low voice if he might say a word to the men.

The chairman of the Union happened to be one of the Champion men. It was only two weeks before that Dr. Saxon had gone out into one of the fiercest storms of the winter, waded through drifts over his head, where Ajax had refused to go, and at a critical time in the illness of this man's baby had dragged it, as if by sheer force of defiance against death, out of the very shadow

of the valley back into the warmth of life. The chair-man was a hard-faced, hard-fisted, but big-hearted Cornish man, who loved his babies as much as any man on earth, and if Dr. Saxon had asked for his last crust of bread or a share of his pasty, he would have said, "Take it all."

"Boys, doctor, he be wanting to say a word or two. It don't belong to be by the rules, but I say, let doctor say his say!"

"Ay, ay! Let's hear doctor!" shouted a hundred voices; and the man who had been speaking at once sat down.

The doctor turned around and faced the men. Stuart never forgot the scene. It flashed into him like light that the doctor was taking all this upon himself to save him, Stuart, from danger of collision with the men. He almost forgot Rhena in his love for his old friend to-night.

And it was a scene for painters, only painters never could catch the full meaning of it all. The doctor looked into the faces of men by whose side he had stood in the little cabins where life was going out, or at the bottom of the mines after some horrible accident, and he was always the same in his unflinching devotion to duty, and his unspoken love for the suffering, and his great skill to beat death back and look hell in the face without a tremor of a nerve or the quiver of an eyelid.

"Now, then," began the doctor in his usual abrupt manner, "there isn't a man here ever heard me try to make a speech in public, is there?"

It was very quiet in the hall, so quiet that the noise of the crowd outdoors could plainly be heard. No one

replied to the doctor's question. The men were all waiting to hear the next word. They were not easily surprised, but the sight of the doctor up there, and the sound of his voice in this new revelation of him, were almost like seeing or hearing a man who had been dead for thirty years come suddenly to life.

"And I'm not going to try it now. But I want to tell you that if you do what you are threatening to do to-night, you'll be bigger fools than I've been calling you for thirty years or more. Why, you must be insane idiots, every mother's son of ye, to think you can gain anything by pulling up pumps! Who'll suffer? The mine owners? What if they do lose a little property up here? Haven't you got sense enough to know that it is only one item out of thousands for them? But it's the whole thing for you. And if you weren't a lot of block-headed dummies, you would know that the result of pulling up the pumps will be simply to give me more work to do in mending your cracked skulls and sewing up a lot of gunshot wounds in your useless bodies; and I tell you I've got my hands full now without having a lot of extra work piled on me, just because you want to have a little picnic with those pumps. And after you've pulled 'em up and about a hundred of you are killed, or get what few brains you have left knocked out, what will you gain besides that? How much chance will there be for mining in the spring with all the shafts flooded? Do you want to kill me with all this preparation for bloodshed? Tell you what I'll do. Any man here that wants me to amputate an arm or leg, or fix his brains back into his empty head after he's gone and got himself mixed up in a fight with the militia, can just take my word for it

here and now, that I will turn him over to the job work of these stranger doctors that have been practicing on you since the fever struck in this winter. Hear that? I simply won't do a thing for you! I'm as mad as you are at the mine owners. I think that, with the exception of Mr. Duncan here, they will have a heavy account to settle at the day of judgment. But, sure as death, you won't gain anything by trying to improve God's punishment for 'em. You know what'll happen if the mines close down for good in the spring. The owners will have to open, if you let the pumps alone; and you can go back at a rise over old wages. The pressure for ore will force the companies to resume. But once you ruin the mines, and what will you do? The babies cry for food in the cabins now, you say; but it will be worse than that if"—The doctor softened his voice for a minute. The effect of it was magical. Stuart could not believe, and will not as long as he lives, that Dr. Saxon was talking for the next few sentences. He has never heard him with that voice since. "The babies that lie out there on the great slope will never hunger again. I have watched hundreds of them leave this unsatisfactory world this winter, and not one of them that did not pull my heartstrings with his little fingers as death won him from me. But God is merciful. There is no doubt of his justice. There isn't a man here who doesn't know I love him and would never counsel an act that I was not sure would be for your good and the good of the wives and children in the long run. Why, every one of you knows"—here the doctor resumed his voice that the miners knew so well, and every one started and came back again, staring at the great rough-coated figure—"that

even Ajax has more sense than to go and kick over the measure that contains his oats. But that's what you plan to do. I always said that the stupidest numskulls that ever lived could be found in De Mott, where I've looked into more cracked craniums than anything else, and I've made up my mind that after this, when I've broken heads to fix up, I'll use cotton or wool, or something like that, to stuff the vacant places I find"—

Just then there was a disturbance down by the door, and next moment a voice broke the silence of the crowd, "Is the doctor here? He's wanted at once outside. Been a row and Pat Penryck has got a broken head. Tell doctor to come right out."

"Hear that!" roared the doctor. "If you pull up pumps, I'll go right up and get killed with the rest of you when the militia fires. And after I've gone who'll come and pump life into you when death has you by the throat? And if I don't get shot I'll leave you and go down to Chicago, where I won't have to furnish the brains for the whole community!"

Without another word the doctor jumped down off the platform and worked his way outside, where he cared for the wounded man as skillfully and tenderly as if his patient had been the President of the Republic.

At first Stuart had started to go out with the doctor. Then he suddenly changed his mind and decided to remain. The doctor had made a decided impression on the men. They were used to his rough, uncomplimentary invective, and they loved him as perhaps they never loved any one else; and he had put the matter so plainly, even if it had been flung at them so roughly, that they were compelled to think.

The next half hour in that old hall that night witnessed the closing chapter in the great strike. Man after man rose and declared that it would be madness to pull up the pumps. The doctor's words had struck into the heart of things, and men who had sworn when they entered the hall to destroy every cent's worth of mine owners' property they could lay hands on, now urged caution and waiting. There was, however, one element they had not reckoned on.

The Union had been for several weeks in a condition bordering on dissolution. Eric had found that out some time before he was confronted with the fact of his own loss of power. He knew that the end was very near. The entire effect of the evening's event so far tended to break down what remained of the Union. Stuart could see the end coming. He sat back against the wall, forgotten by the leaders and their men as the talk went on. There were several fiery appeals for carrying out the original plans of destroying the mines. The crowd swayed all over the room as one and another from the floor as well as from the platform spoke. Finally the end came in a rush. A great shambling figure, no less than our old friend Sanders, who had been charged by the doctor with getting cod-liver oil from the dispensary wherewith to grease his boots, rose, and in a voice that, in spite of its being perforated with spasmodic coughs, was easily heard, made a motion that the strike be declared off.

A pandemonium started in with the debate on this motion. The crowd outside caught the news and it maddened the mob. There was a great rush for the hall entrance. The chairman finally put the motion as yells

of "Question!" "Question!" rose on every side, and it carried by a two-thirds vote.

Instantly the men in the hall started to rush out into the street, and were met at the hall entrance by the yelling crowd trying to get in. For several minutes there was a tremendous struggle, but gradually the crowd outside, as it learned of the action of the Union leaders, gave way, and when one of the most prominent men in the De Mott range put the question, standing on the steps of the courthouse at the corner, the majority of the voices yelled "Ay!" to the question declaring the strike off. There was no accounting for this to Stuart's mind, except by the fact that all along the men had grown more and more tired of the strike and had really been waiting for some one to make the break. Then they followed like sheep, and in less than ten minutes the Union was past history.

A few of the disaffected men that night, inflamed with drink and mad at the close of the strike, went up to the Queen mine determined to pull up the pumps and destroy as much as possible; but the troops had already anticipated such an attempt, and, in a skirmish with the miners, drove them back, no one, however, being killed, and only a few heads broken with clubs and ore missiles. Stuart did not know of this until the next day, and the doctor helped mend the broken heads, grumbling as he did so, and declaring with each new case that it was positively the very last one he would attend.

Stuart came out into the street feeling that his part of the evening's work had been very insignificant. He had, in fact, been almost ignored in the excitement, and had sat a silent spectator of the affair. He was calm

enough to realize that the doctor's abrupt statement, combined with the great love the miners had for him, had a great deal to do with the way the matters were being shaped. The crowd still remained in the streets, but it was broken up into groups discussing the situation and wondering what the owners would do now.

Stuart was standing by the doctor's cutter, waiting for him to return, when a man touched him on the arm. He turned, and there stood Eric. He had run nearly all the way from Champion, but Stuart did not know that.

"Eric!" cried Stuart.

"I got here just in time to be of no use," said Eric gloomily. Then he added with more feeling, "You are not hurt?"

"No. There has been no disturbance. You've heard that the strike is declared off? How did you come over?"

"Yes; I heard the news quick enough. I came on foot. I will never trust a crowd again. I thought I knew these men. I would have sworn nothing could prevent their pulling up the pumps to-night. That shows how little I have really known them."

"We can thank the doctor for the way things have turned. You never heard such a talk as he gave the men."

"No, and you never will again," said the doctor as he came up and began to untie Ajax. "It was my first and will be my last on the stage. I wouldn't have gone up this time only I wanted to tell the good-for-nothing lot of them what fools they are. I seldom have such a chance to say so to as large a number of 'em at once. Come on. Going back to Champion with me, Stuart?"

"Wait a minute, doctor!" cried Stuart. He drew Eric off one side. "Eric, you came over on purpose to share the danger with me. I know what it means." Eric did not answer. "You are feeling the injustice of the men towards you. Don't let it make you bitter. The cause is the same." Still Eric was silent. "Won't you go back with us? The doctor can make room."

"No; I'll stay over here with some friends. I'll be back to-morrow," Eric replied as if with an effort.

Stuart laid a hand on his shoulder. "Eric," he said simply, "I love you."

Eric choked. In the darkness a tear rolled down over his cheek. He turned away and walked into the street, and Stuart went back to Champion with the doctor.

"Eric takes it hard; his loss of influence over the men," said Stuart with a sigh.

"Put not your trust in the mob," replied the doctor shortly.

When they drove back into the square at Champion the lights in the Salvation Army Hall were shining out a welcome. To Stuart it seemed as if the old weather-beaten building was glorified. Whatever the outcome of that night's action on the part of the miners, he felt that he had a place in the love of one person, who, believing in him and his desire to be true to his brother, would share with him the burden and responsibility and privilege that awaited them under this new turn of affairs. Between this man and woman had now sprung up a mutual faith, each in the other, which made possible for them much of the great work that lay before them. Rhena dated from that night when her lover

risked his life, as they both thought, at the call of duty, a new and sacred respect and attachment for him.

The next few days in Champion and De Mott were full of excitement. The men flocked back to the mines and gathered about the little offices of the mine captains up on the hills by the engine houses. The Cleveland owners had as yet made no movement to open up again. The captains on the De Mott ranges were waiting every hour for orders. Stuart was independent so far as his own action was concerned, and, true to his promise, made so long ago, he at once posted notices that he would give all the men yet on the pay roll of the Champion mines two dollars a day. In a week he had more applicants than he could employ. He at once took steps to open up some new shafts which had been begun by his father. This enlarged his force of men by five hundred, but the men from De Mott came over in crowds, and he was not able to employ a fifth part of them. He knew that he had made enemies of the other owners, and he anticipated a move on their part to ruin him commercially; but the longer they held out and refused to open up or grant the two dollars a day, Stuart was practically in a position to gain many markets once closed to him. The demand for ore was growing more imperative. As it happened also, the Champion mines were producing a very superior grade of ore, and Stuart could afford to pay the two dollars in any case, whether the other mines were worked or not.

As a matter of history the whole outcome of the matter was as follows. The De Mott range did not open up in full for two weeks. The Cleveland owners, after doing all in their power to coerce Stuart, finding that every

day only placed him, owing to the peculiar condition of the trade, in a better position, finally opened up a few mines at a ten per cent. rise on previous wages. This almost led to another strike and a formation of the Union again. But the long winter, the long idleness, so unusual to the men, the great loss they had sustained, had their effect, and the De Mott men began to go back a few at a time. This led to a singular condition of affairs in the iron region, never before known. Nearly fifteen hundred men were receiving two dollars a day at Champion, while on the lower range twice as many men were working for one dollar and ninety cents. At the end of two months, however, with the opening up of the lake navigation, ore went up with such a bound that De Mott ranges advanced wages to two dollars, and the men at last actually received, largely through Stuart's firmness in holding out, the amount they had originally demanded. But there was no great demonstration over the fact. The strike had been too costly. The suffering had left its mark on every home, and the men were not in a condition, when the rise in wages finally came, to spend much enthusiasm over it.

Long before this had come about, Stuart and Rhena had planned for their new life together.

One day, very soon after Champion mines had opened, the two were out looking at the new cottages going up in Cornish town. The work had been pushed hard, and at last satisfactory results were being seen. Most of the houses would be ready for use in a fortnight. After looking on and directing some special part of the settlement, Stuart asked Rhena to go up the trail with him to the old stump where he had first told her he loved her.

When they reached the place they turned to look down at the town. It was winter still. The snow lay deep in all the valley. The sound of the workmen came up to them from Cornish town. The engine stacks were smoking all over the range. All the ore stock piles were dotted over with busy moving figures.

Stuart said something about the site being a good one for a house.

"I don't know but I shall put up a little cottage on this stump, and we could begin housekeeping on a modest scale like the rest of the people down there. What do you think of that?"

"But wouldn't we be putting ourselves above them to come up here?" asked Rhena slyly.

"No, we would simply be in a position to see all of them and be better able to help them in case of need."

"I don't think the stump is quite large enough for a foundation," said Rhena very soberly, though she was very happy. "After I had opened the front door I would have to go outside to shut it again."

"You are very hard to suit, madam," replied Stuart. "What will you have? a palace? a marble pile? I thought a Salvation Army lass would be ready to put up with almost anything!"

"Stuart,"—Rhena spoke with real seriousness,—"I could be happy with you in one of the cottages down there, and you and I know that together. The Army is very dear to me. I cannot leave it."

"I do not ask you to," replied Stuart, smiling. "I first fell in love with your bonnet, and I hope you will wear it at the wedding."

"I am thinking of the poor men and women I have

been living with so long," continued Rhena. Her great eyes filled with tears. "I can't bear to have them think that because I am going to be the wife of the mine owner and live in his house I am going to be lifted so far away from them that they will —Stuart, you know what I mean. If I didn't believe so completely in you and your thought of stewardship of God's property, I would never dare marry you, a man with all this money, and master of such a house. I cannot even think of the selfish surroundings of my life without a shudder.

"We need great wisdom to use God's blessings. It will be a joy to us to work out the problem together, won't it?"

Stuart said something so softly that, with the exception of Rhena, only a snowbird on a fir tree near by heard it, and the snowbird never told.

They talked for awhile about their approaching marriage. It was to be the following week.

"Louise and Aunt Royal are going to New York the first of the week. My only regret, Rhena, is in being unable to reconcile them to us. We move in a different world from theirs."

"You have done all you could, I am sure, Stuart," replied Rhena gently. She was thinking of another matter. Finally she asked, almost timidly, "The Army has asked me if I expected to be married in the church. Would you mind, Stuart, if we were married in the old hall?"

"No," said Stuart. He was, and always had been, indifferent to the particular forms and ceremonies of life, even the old life from which he was now emancipated, and he understood Rhena's reason for this request. She

belonged to the army, and the little squad of officers and privates was very dear to her. She longed to assure them in every way possible that her marriage had not in any way removed them from her in sympathy.

So, one evening about a week after the departure of Louise and Aunt Royal, Stuart went down to Eric's cottage, and met Andrew and the doctor there. Together they went over to Rhena's lodging, and presently she came out dressed in the army costume, that Stuart said was the best and most becoming for her to wear. She took his arm, and with Eric and the doctor and Andrew marching behind, they stepped over to the hall.

The army was in great excitement. It had paraded the streets, held its outdoor meeting and was back at the hall to welcome the bride and groom. The little band stood just outside, and what it lacked in numbers it made up in muscle. The big drum had never received such a vigorous beating as it received that night. The tambourines would certainly have been knocked into small pieces if they had not been made of very tough material. And "Scaly Joe," now known as "Witnessing Joseph," would surely have blown himself through the holes of his flute if he had not been possessed of a pair of lungs that could be almost indefinitely expanded.

Outside the hall, standing about in a great crowd, were the miners of Champion. They greeted the little bridal party with hearty cheers as it came up, and as soon as the band had finished, and Stuart and Rhena, Andrew and Eric and the doctor had gone in, they crowded after, filling up the old room until it could not hold another person.

There were a good many brief prayers and several

rousing songs as the army took its place on the platform. The major, also, carried away by the greatness of the occasion, made a rattling speech, punctured with frequent amens and hallelujahs from the rest of the army. The collection was not forgotten, and as it was an occasion out of a lifetime, and the men were getting wages again, the tambourines were heavy with silver, and the major began to think of putting up suitable headquarters at once.

Finally the noise ceased and Andrew read the marriage service, Rhena and Stuart standing in the middle of the platform, Eric and the doctor a little one side and behind Stuart. This part of the ceremony was not strictly according to Salvation Army rules, but "everything goes to-night," as "Witnessing Joseph" said in a few remarks after the collection. Andrew's prayer was full of beauty and power. "That was almost as good a prayer as some we have here in the hall confession nights," said the major afterwards. The whole ceremony was very impressive to Stuart, in spite of the surroundings and the army exercises that accompanied them. For he felt in it all that this woman standing by his side in this costume, which had become dear to a sin-sick and body-suffering humanity, was the woman who was to walk hand in hand with him through life with all these people now crowded into the hall, the largest factor in both their experiences. And it seemed to him specially appropriate that they should solemnize the most sacred event of their lives in the presence of those whom they had begun to help and regard as truly belonging to the great brotherhood in the family which is one in God the Father.

They had planned to remain some time after the service was over to shake hands with the men. But the crowd outside was clamoring to get in, and finally, at the major's suggestion, the men filed up to the platform, shook hands, offered their greetings, and went down the other side of the aisle and out of the hall. The men outside soon learned of this arrangement and formed a line that reached out into the square past the band stand, and before Stuart and Rhena knew what the major had arranged they were facing a stream of miners that bade fair to keep them standing there two or three hours.

"Can you stand it, Mrs. Duncan?" asked Stuart, looking into the blushing face which never looked so beautiful in its army bonnet as to-night.

"You forget, sir, that I have stood in this hall a good many long hours this winter. I feel quite confident of tiring you out. Isn't it beautiful of them? This is worth more, Stuart, than all the fashion and parade of society; for these people love us and we know it."

"Ay, ay," replied Stuart proudly, happy of his wife's health and strength and Christian beauty. "'That belongs to be.' It is worth a million times more to us than all the gingerbread trimmings of society fashionable weddings."

Meanwhile the doctor, Andrew, and Eric disappeared. When Stuart and Rhena finally came out after receiving the men, and after a closing volley of shouts and drumbeats from the army, they found the three men by the side of a two-seated cutter trimmed with spruce boughs. The doctor motioned them to take the back seat.

"What!" cried Stuart, "you here yet, doctor? I thought sure you had been called away."

"It's a wonder I wasn't," replied the doctor. "All through the ceremoney I thought I could hear a voice saying, 'Is doctor in there? He's wanted at once. Lew Trethven's broke his leg and wants doctor to come right up.' Now, then, are you ready? Eric and Andrew are going with me to escort you home. We were afraid you might lose your way."

"Do you dare ride with the doctor?" asked Stuart of Rhena.

"I dare go anywhere with you," she replied; and Stuart was excusable for kissing her as he lifted her into the cutter.

The doctor had hitched Ajax up with the fastest horse he could find in the hotel stables, and after they had started he had his hands full. The miners sent up a cheer as they dashed into the square and out into the road leading up to the Duncan house. And so, with the love of the men whose lives and happiness were to be henceforth so deeply mingled with theirs, in the company of the friends who had shared so largely of their experiences, and were to be even more to them in coming days, this man and woman began the life that not even death can part, for they are one in Jesus Christ.

A week from that same evening, in a large mansion on a fashionable avenue in New York, Louise Duncan and Hal Vasplaine were married. A card announcing the event was sent to Stuart by Aunt Royal, at whose house the event took place. No notice of the marriage was sent to Rhena as Stuart's wife. It was the first intimation Stuart had had of the fact, the card reaching him

two days after. He grieved over the event deeply, and felt that the gulf between his sister and himself was impassable, but his life was crowded with great objects, and Rhena was all in all to him, and as time went on he found the sharpness of this pang lessened, though he never for a moment ceased his prayers and love for Louise.

The demands on both Stuart and Rhena were certainly no less now that the mines were opened again. The cottages were completed, but Stuart contemplated a general tearing down of all the old cabins on the range. In this he was met by an unexpected and irritating obstinacy on the part of the miners, who did not want to be disturbed.

"They're the most ungrateful lot on earth," said the doctor, to whom Stuart was talking about it; "if I was you, I'd hire some one to touch off every last cabin some windy night and burn up every last one of 'em—I mean the cabins. They, I mean the men, haven't got brains enough among them all to start a home for feeble-minded old women!"

Stuart was wrestling with this problem, and at the same time adding to his plans for The Hall of Humanity. Many and many a long conference was held in Eric's cottage, at Andrew's and in his own house over the project. Rhena had also proposed another plan, at first stoutly opposed by Eric, and even Andrew, but afterwards heartily seconded by them. It was, in brief, the shaping of the Duncan mansion into a modern hospital to be in charge of Dr. Saxon. The house was too large for a living house. Stuart and Rhena wanted to be nearer the town, and Stuart had made his plans to build

at once a house that would represent their ideas of what a home should be, and enable them to be of more use in very many ways. They were too far away from the people. Rhena still continued her army work to a large extent, and the people all knew that her marriage had not lessened her love for them or her desire and willingness to save them. It was simply a question of using to the very best advantage the wealth which was in their power to use. In many respects the old mansion was admirably adapted for a hospital; and the doctor was certainly entitled now to a position where he could spend the remainder of his life in usefulness and peace.

Stuart and Rhena were talking this all over one evening in early spring. The foundation for The Hall of Humanity was going up very fast, and they were also running over their plans for the great number of things they hoped the building would represent. The lights had been turned on and it was getting on in the evening. A soft rain was falling outside, and the big pines were sobbing the approach of a heavy storm. Stuart was sitting at the big table in the dining room with plans scattered about, and Rhena was walking up and down, her face alive with enthusiasm over some great idea, when the bell rang.

Something about the sound of it caused Stuart to rise and go to the door himself. As he flung it open, the wind blew a fine mist of rain into the hall, along with the fragrant odor of the dripping pines. But he was conscious of only one thing.

There on the stone steps lay a woman's form, and he knew as he stooped and lifted her that his sister had remembered what he said such a cruelly brief time before.

He carried her into the chamber where his father had died and laid her on the same bed. As he did so, and as Rhena gently threw back the wet fold of a cloak which lay across the face, Louise moved, and then opened her eyes and looked up at Stuart and Rhena. They will never forget that look. It told them as plainly as words that Louise had come home to die.

Ah! the Nemesis of the world is very bitter when it does come,—and it always comes,— in God's time.

CHAPTER XII.

STEWARDSHIP.

FOR a moment Louise looked at Stuart and Rhena as if she knew them. Then she sat up, partly supporting herself by one hand, and with the other seeming to grope after something. There was a look of madness in her eyes.

"Father! He's hurt! Don't you know Stuart? The horses ran away. We were thrown out! Why doesn't some one send for the doctor?"

Rhena slipped out of the room and telephoned for Dr. Saxon. Stuart fell on his knees by the bed, and the next half-hour was one of the most agonizing he ever knew. Louise raved and wept. She kept going over the old times, repeating word for word exactly, many conversations between herself and Stuart at the time he had begun to decide on a new life. Everything dated from Ross Duncan's death. There were also, mingled with all that was so painful in Stuart's memory, a great many expressions and exclamations which made him shudder and put his hands over his ears, words which revealed experiences of the life Louise had known since leaving Champion. Stuart did not dare yet to imagine all that these words meant.

When Dr. Saxon finally reached the house and entered the room, Louise was lying down moaning. The doctor went right up to her and spoke her name. She

opened her eyes and looked him full in the face; she shrieked out hysterically, "Doctor! doctor! Save me! I'm going mad! I am mad!"

"You poor child!" And that was all he said.

Then Louise began to cry terribly. She spoke her Aunt Royal's name in a voice that made even the doctor quiver a little. And after that, as suddenly as if she had been struck dumb, she fell back like one dead, and lay so still that Stuart thought at first the end had come already.

He and Rhena stood pale and stricken. It had all come upon them so suddenly. The doctor did all in his power. There was not much he could do. At the end of half an hour Louise came out of the condition of exhaustion into which she had fallen, and cried again, this time calling out the name of Vasplaine with such terror that Stuart could not endure the sound and went into the other room across the hall. Rhena followed him.

"This is awful!" said Stuart with a groan. "What do you suppose this all means? What has that villain done?"

"It means that he has left her, and that"—Rhena had guessed so much. It had come like a sudden blow to them. She stepped up to Stuart and confronted him.

"Please God we'll save her life!" he cried.

"And her reason," added Rhena gravely. "Pray God we may!"

They went back together into that chamber, and with the doctor watched through the night, fearing, at the doctor's suggestion, lest she should suddenly rise and go out into the storm, which before morning beat on the mansion in great fury, while the big pines sobbed like a requiem over dead hopes and buried loves.

With the gray light of morning a change came. The doctor noticed it first. He had not closed his eyes once. Now he rose and went into the library, signing to Stuart to follow him.

"She is out of immediate danger," he said, as Stuart stood there by him, nervous with the strain. "She has had some terrible mental shock. It is doubtful if she can recover. But she has the Duncan constitution. All things are possible. I think she will be quiet through the day. If she isn't send for me at once."

He wrung Stuart's hand and went down into the town through the storm, and an hour later Stuart saw him dashing up the hill and past the house over the Beury road to attend some desperate case out on the hills. How the doctor lived without sleep was always a wonder to all Champion.

As for Louise, she lay in a condition of stupor through the day and the following night. When occasionally she roused at Stuart's calling her name she seemed to know him, but did not express surprise at being back in her old home. Gradually the truth grew upon Stuart and Rhena that nearly the entire period of Louise's life since her marriage was a blank to her. She would lie for hours silent and without expression in her great eyes, which were still beautiful, although her once lovely face had grown old and haggard. When she spoke, it was with the fretful, complaining voice she had used when Stuart had angered her. To his great surprise and relief, she did not appear to dislike Rhena. She accepted her gentle, loving nursing as a matter of course, neither showing gratitude nor expressing resentment. She grew feebler and more exacting in her

demands, so that Rhena had her powers taxed to the utmost in providing for her many wants. She asked constantly for the most expensive and difficult articles of food to be prepared, demanded costly flowers for the decoration of the room, and was continually begging Stuart to buy her jewels to wear. He went down town and took out of the office safe, where they had been lying ever since his mother's death, a necklace of pearls and another of diamonds, together with a ruby bracelet and several turquoise rings. Ross Duncan had bought these for his wife when he had been able to say that he was worth a million dollars, and the entire value of them would have kept a dozen families in comfort all their lives. Mrs. Duncan had not cared much for these playthings and had seldom worn them. Ross Duncan had willed them to Stuart instead of Louise, because of a whim he took one day. He said they were family jewels and ought to remain with the son of the house.

Louise seized on these baubles of light with an eagerness and a love of display that were terrible to Stuart. She wore first the diamonds and then the pearls around her small white neck, and finally put them both on, wearing them together with the bracelet and the rings. She cried continually for new dresses, and at last Rhena, at Stuart's suggestion, brought out some of Stuart's mother's silk gowns which had been packed away in a chest in the attic, and with a little changing they were made to fit Louise, who, although she was able to sit up only a few hours, took the most pitifully childish delight in putting on all this finery, with Rhena's help, and then, with a hand mirror constantly within reach, commenting on her appearance with the greatest eagerness.

One day Rhena slipped away from her while she was busy in this manner, and as she was going into the library, Stuart came in from the drawing room. He had been down superintending the new building.

"O Stuart, Stuart!" Rhena almost sobbed as she closed the door so that Louise could not hear, "it is so horrible! It seems so like—so like clothing Death itself in tinsel and glitter. Oh, the mockery of it makes my heart ache! If we only knew more of the real cause of Louise's trouble, we might know how to bring her back to reason! Only"—

"Only what, dear?" Stuart asked, taking her in his arms to comfort her, as he remembered how faithful she had been to her great trust in caring for his sister.

"Only—the end is not far off, I fear. She is wasting away like the snow on the hills in spring."

Stuart groaned. "I have seen it, dear; the doctor has done all he can. He gives no hope." He was silent. Then he spoke with calm strength. "I am going down to New York, and I am going to see Aunt Royal and probe the thing to the end. I have written her, but had no reply. And all our efforts to find Vasplaine have failed. The family knows nothing of him. I must go down, anyway, to see after some necessary materials for the building. I will be back inside of a week."

So that was the way Stuart came to be in New York just before Aunt Royal had planned to pack her trunks and go abroad for the summer.

He was ushered into the great drawing room of the mansion on the avenue and remained standing by one of the windows waiting for Aunt Royal to come down. His heart was heavy as he thought of Louise. He tried to compose himself for the interview, remembering his

Christian faith and all that it required of him in all circumstances.

Her entrance was hardly noticed by him when she finally appeared. Velvet carpets are made to deaden the footsteps of market gardeners' daughters who have made their money by investing in tenement and saloon property.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Stuart, I am sure," said Aunt Royal in her usual polite, gentle voice.

"You know what I am here for, aunt?" Stuart asked, coming to the point at once.

"No, I don't know as I do. I suppose some business in connection with your philanthropic schemes in Champion. I hear the strike is all over. I suppose the miners have learned sense by their folly."

"Aunt," said Stuart firmly, ignoring all she said, "I have come down here to learn the truth about Louise. Tell me all you know about it. It may help to restore her reason before she dies. For God's sake, aunt, if you know what I ought to know, let me have it."

Aunt Royal's face paled just a trifle. "Restore her reason?"

"Yes," replied Stuart with some sternness of tone, "her reason. She is out of her mind. Her memory of events since her marriage is a blank. She must have received some great shock. Of course we know Vasplaine has deserted her. And she is dying. After all—if"—Stuart paused and his heart almost stood still as he caught the expression on Aunt Royal's face. He was not looking at her, but at her reflection in the large cheval glass. And it was the reflection of an absolutely selfish and heartless enjoyment of social standing, un-

ruffled by the coarse sins and miseries and aches of a dying humanity.

Aunt Royal's voice came to his ears with its usual placid smoothness.

"Louise left me on her wedding tour immediately after her marriage. They went South and then took a trip out West. When they returned they took rooms in the Avenue Hotel. I saw them often but not intimately. Vasplaine had begun to drink. There was trouble, of course. But when he finally left her I was as much surprised as any one."

She paused suddenly, and Stuart was silent. The great gilt clock on the marble mantel dropped a silver ball into a bowl, and Aunt Royal turned her head slightly toward it. Stuart still looked at her reflection in the mirror.

"When did Louise leave New York for Champion?" he finally asked.

"I don't know anything about it," replied Aunt Royal with the first mark of irritation she had shown.

"Do you mean to say, aunt, that after Vasplaine's desertion of her, Louise never came near you?" asked Stuart, turning full upon her and looking into her face almost as resolutely as if he really knew the facts.

Again Aunt Royal's face paled. She could not control her blood, even after so many years of artificial repose in the exercise of society manners.

"I tell you I did not see her after Vasplaine's disgraceful desertion of her. He turned out to be a gambler and a dissipated fool of the worst sort, and flung Louise's property and money away like a madman. I don't know where he is now."

"I have not asked about him," said Stuart dryly; "I am anxious for Louise."

He remained a moment more in silent thought. He could not help believing that this woman had not told the truth, but he was powerless to prove his belief. At last he found his heart so sick at the thought that he longed to escape from the house.

"You will stay to lunch?" Aunt Royal asked politely, as he rose and moved to go.

"No, I thank you," replied Stuart quietly. "I must start back to Champion this afternoon."

"I hope poor Louise will recover," she said, and was about to add something more, when one of the servants came into the hall and announced an important message at the telephone from some one connected with Aunt Royal's proposed summer tour.

"Excuse me while I answer this. I will let you see yourself out!" she exclaimed with her conventional politeness, and was gone.

Stuart was just going out when the servant, who had opened the door for him when he came in, spoke to him.

"I can tell you something about your sister, sir, if you will wait a minute."

"Of course I want to know all I can." Stuart was surprised, and reflected that this man might be simply a talebearer, or trying to earn a fee; but the thought that Louise might possibly be the gainer by knowledge he might learn of her quieted Stuart to listen.

"I haven't time to tell it all out," whispered the man hurriedly. "But Mrs. Vasplaine, she came here one night about a week ago, and I couldn't help hearing what went on in the drawing room. She begged her aunt to take

her in and shelter her till she could find a place. Her husband had run off with another man's wife and gambled away all the money, as near as I could make out, and the poor lady was almost crazy over the shame and ruin of it. She begged and begged, but her aunt wouldn't listen to taking her back, with all the scandal. You understand, sir, how people in society looks at those things, and so at last Mrs. Vasplaine went away. She looked as if she would drown herself, sir. I felt so sure of it I slipped out back way and followed her, and saw her take a depot 'bus, and then I lost her. I don't mind telling you, sir; this is truth. I leave her this week, anyway. I'd as soon live with the devil's wife as with her, and no mistake, begging pardon if she is your relative."

Stuart clinched his hands tight, and in his heart he uttered a groan.

There stood Aunt Royal, her face flaming. She had come into the hall through a side door right behind the servant. How much of the man's story she had heard, Stuart could not tell, but it was enough to let her know that Stuart at last knew.

"It's a lie, a miserable lie!" she screamed. It was the only time Stuart ever saw her in a passion. He had his back to the door, and for a moment he looked her in the face, and then without a word he turned around, opened it, and walked out. The warm sunshine seemed like something almost human as he closed that door behind him and walked away. He knew the truth now. At last there was no doubt in his mind that Louise had been denied a shelter in her greatest need by this society woman, who would risk hell itself rather than the possi-

ble loss of society standing and her own selfish ease and pleasure. And that he was right in believing the servant's story was shown by after events, as well as by items of news which came to him from various sources through New York acquaintances.

Putting all he could gather into a connected series, he managed, before returning to Champion, to learn in general what must have been Louise's experience after Vasplaine had ruined her financially and then brutally abandoned her.

She had found herself practically without friends in New York. The only relative there was Aunt Royal. She naturally turned to her in the hour of her trouble. She was probably at that time well-nigh crazed with the succession of blows that had fallen upon her. It seemed to Stuart incredible at first that Vasplaine in so short a time could get possession of Louise's money and squander it. But the more he learned of his career the less he wondered. Louise had trusted him, fascinated by a certain attractiveness such men often possess. And when he finally left her she found herself alone in a great city, ruined.

Her aunt's refusal to receive her added the final stroke to the weight of her shame and misery. Stuart never knew what Louise had done after leaving her aunt's house before she appeared so unexpectedly in Champion. There were at least two days when he supposed she must have wandered about or taken the wrong train to get home, all that time fast losing her reason, and yet with enough left to shape her way back to the old home. The shock of her experiences told the story of her condition as Stuart found her when he lifted her up from the doorstep that rainy night.

All this gave Stuart bitter thoughts as he hurried back to Champion. He almost dreaded to get off the train, for fear the doctor would meet him as he did before when his father had died. But no one was there with any news, and when he reached the house he was surprised to find Louise sitting up and looking no worse than when he went away. He tried to take courage for her. The doctor said she might linger on through the summer, but gave no hope of mental recovery. With this constant shadow of death in their home, therefore, Stuart and Rhena with thoughtful and serious hearts, their love for each other refined and strengthened by this affliction, went forward with their great plans for the brotherhood of Champion.

The Hall of Humanity was going up rapidly now. Stuart had determined to have it ready for dedication before winter set in if possible. He had employed a very large force of the best workmen he could find. All this, of course, meant that he and Andrew, Eric and Rhena and the doctor, together with other good people in the town, had given a vast amount of thought to the plans and purposes of the building. At the same time Stuart was beginning the foundations of his own home down in the town. The Hall of Humanity stood on one side of the square nearly opposite St. John's Church. Stuart had owned several small buildings there and had torn them down to make room for the new building. His own house was to be near by.

A few days after Stuart's return, Eric and Andrew had come up at Stuart's request, and with him and Rhena were sitting in the library at the Duncan mansion, discussing the plans that were now beginning to

take visible shape. Eric had gone back into the mines with the other men, and seemed to be passing through an experience of some bitterness. He had not yet recovered from his humiliation at the loss of his influence over the men. He was able to be present at the conference on this occasion, owing to a half holiday which the miners were celebrating in one of the numerous lodges.

"I don't just understand this arrangement here," said Andrew, who was examining the plans of the hall which lay spread out on the table.

Stuart explained the particular point, and then they all began to talk about the building.

"What is your exact idea about the use of the big hall?" asked Eric as he pointed at the diagram marking the place of an immense auditorium.

"I don't know as I have very many 'exact' ideas about any of the future uses of the building, except that I want it to represent, in general, the great word Helpfulness. I have thought of great singers and players and lecturers who could be induced to come up here at moderate prices, understanding our object, and then pack the hall full of men and women and children at a small sum within their reach to pay. I believe we could attract up here some of the best talent in music and speech in all the world, and give the miners of Champion a taste of some of the world's best beauty. Then I would have a week or two of fine picture exhibitions or fine art exhibits and so on, with, say four times a year, a great flower exhibit. I am a convert to your idea, Eric, of music and flowers for everybody. We could let Andrew here have charge of the flower show, if he would promise not to ruin us with hothouse extravagances."

Andrew was so excited over the thought that he got up and began to pace the room.

"My!" he exclaimed; "just think of a hall the size of that lined all the way around with chrysanthemums or callas or orchids! You'll allow me a few orchids, won't you, Stuart?"

"But, look here!" cried Rhena. "Don't let Andrew spend all our money on orchids first thing, the extravagant fellow! Think of all the dollars it will take to run these other departments, Stuart. I have questioned some the practicability of all these rooms leading out from the main hall."

"Why, you did the planning for them yourself, little woman. What's the matter with them?"

"The question I raise is, how much all these different things will really help the people. Now, here, for instance, is the space we have left for the Salvation Army Hall. I admit it looks beautiful on paper, and it will no doubt look fine when it is done in wood and stone, but will the army feel at home in it? Will they be able, in there, to reach the very people who now come into the old hall?"

"Why, you critical soul, what do you want us to do? Make a specimen army hall like the old shanty we have already, and knock out a dozen panes of glass and stuff miners' hats and the defunct remnants of old clothes into the holes to make the place appear homelike and attractive?"

"There's a good deal of sense in what your wife says, just the same," said Andrew. "If the Salvation Army gets to be too refined, it won't be the Salvation Army any more, and it won't do the army's work."

"Christ wore good clothes, didn't he?" asked Eric bluntly.

Everybody was silent a minute. They all knew what he meant. And still, if the army stood for a distinct way of reaching humanity, who could tell what the result might be if that special way was to be disturbed?

"Don't worry about that," Stuart finally said, with much homely sense in his thought of the future. "If going into a decent, well-lighted, warmed, and seated room is going to destroy the army's usefulness, we'll turn it out into the old barracks again. Rhena and I have discussed that a good deal. It's the only thing we ever disagreed over, and we don't really disagree over that."

"These kindergarten rooms on this side of the building are going to be models!" cried Andrew with enthusiasm. He had suggested these rooms and had superintended the plans and specifications.

"That's the right idea!" cried Eric. "I'm like the doctor in thinking a good many of the older folks among us are fools or numskulls. But in the children lies the hope of the entire labor question if they have the right start."

They were all bending over the table now, discussing the numerous features of the hall with its almost bewildering multitude of appliances. There was to be a model reading room and library; several rooms for social gatherings, and various amusements; bathrooms and gymnasium; a picture gallery; a room fitted up expressly for the use of a lantern and photography; and other rooms where classes could be gathered if the time ever came when it seemed wise to reach out with the helping hand farther than they saw the way clear yet.

"There's one thing we haven't reckoned upon much," said Eric almost moodily at last. "What use can all these people make of the various new things that you are going to give them, if, after all, they have to spend the bigger part of their lives in the daytime, at least, underground? And who is going to say that all these fine things thrust into the men's minds will not produce a discontent that will result in time in greater misery than the condition they are now in?"

"Why, you old pessimist! would you say to the human race, 'Don't smell that pretty flower to-day, because you know you may not have any to-morrow and that will make you discontented'? Because a man's life is devoid of all pleasant things, shall we keep him in that condition, for fear he may grow discontented by knowing something better?"

"That's right!" exclaimed Rhena, her eyes flashing. "Eric knows better than to talk that way. Think what these men have missed all their lives! Surely it will be very little for some of them to enjoy, the best we can do. And as to the time they are underground, Stuart, put your brains to work to bring about a condition of labor so that the men can have more leisure, and see more of God's earth when the sun shines on it."

"Hear! hear!" cried Andrew. "'Bring me,' says Aladdin to the slave of the lamp, 'thirty golden dishes full of pearls, and as many more full of diamonds.'"

"What she asks is apparently impossible now," responded Stuart, "but why should it always be so? Why should so many thousands of human beings dig in the ground, in the dark, in constant and deadly peril, shut out from most of the pleasures of the earth, in order that

other men like me may have a more comfortable time?"

"Because they don't know how to do anything else, and would not if they could," said Eric bluntly.

"You don't know that, Eric; you only think so because they never have done anything else."

"Well, some one must do mining. Humanity needs iron for its civilization, and how is it going to get it if some of us don't go down into the earth and dig it out? Shall we take turns around? Suppose we try that. I'll go down this week, and next Andrew will take my place while I preach for him, and the next week Stuart can"—

"Yes, that would be a fine plan," said Rhena. "Next you would be wanting me to go into the mines and serve my week. And I would be willing," Rhena added in a deep sadness, which sometimes fell upon her, "if I thought it would help to solve any problem, and make life a greater and more blessed reality to thousands of souls than it is now. How little we seem to be doing to answer the question, after all. We need more wisdom, and, dear friends, we have not gone to the eternal source of all strength and truth as we should. Before we talk over our plans any longer, don't you think we ought to pray awhile?"

The request was so simply and naturally put that the rest at once, as they sat about the table, bowed their heads while Rhena prayed. Andrew followed, then Eric, and lastly Stuart. They were straightforward petitions for wisdom, and a larger knowledge of God's will. The somewhat foggy atmosphere of the discussion seemed to clear up after that little pause, while they talked with their Father, and the rest of the afternoon they seemed

to feel that whatever mistakes they might make, and however short they might fall of answering any real problems, their hearts and wills were asking for divine wisdom, and their great purpose was to use all talents and all property for the uplift of humanity.

About four o'clock, as Eric and Andrew were getting up to go, the doctor came in to see Louise. He had come into the house without being noticed, and had entered the library just as Stuart was saying, "It will be a splendid thing for the doctor. It will keep him busy, but he won't be exposed any longer to these terrible rides over the range in winter."

"If you are talking about that plan of turning this house into a hospital and shutting me up in it the rest of my life, you're wasting time and breath," said the doctor gruffly. "I simply won't do anything of the kind. I can't live without fresh air."

The doctor looked grimly at the little group about the table. It was raining hard and he had come in dripping. He was going to lay off his wet coat in the hall before going to see Louise, but as he stood there he looked as if he ought to be very uncomfortable. The water had run from the brim of his old hat down upon his right ear, and what semblance of a collar he had on when he started out had melted away down his neck under the folds of his greatcoat.

"But, doctor, why don't you have more sense, as you say to the rest of us?" remonstrated Stuart. "Here you are to-day wet through, and like as not you won't have a dry thread on you again until to-morrow or next week, for all that I know. You'll take your death cold this way."

"Did you ever know me to take my death cold?"

"And this place we are arranging for you," continued Stuart, "will be a comfortable berth for you the rest of your life. You're getting too old, doctor, to expose yourself through another winter."

"I'm not such an old fool as to be cooped up in a hospital yet. Who will look after the men outside if I stay here all the time?" the doctor asked stubbornly.

"Why, we can get a man all right. There are plenty of young doctors who are eager to begin practice here."

"Yes!" burst out the doctor, "young upstarts who have a lot of new-fangled surgical instruments and are eager to try every one of 'em on every case they get; anything from rheumatism to liver complaint. I was talking with one of 'em last winter, and he wanted me to swallow his latest contraption for operating on the throat with an electric searchlight and battery combined, and I don't know what all! What'll become of my people if these fellows are turned loose on 'em with their inventions? No, sir! I don't intend to turn 'em over to any such risks. Mines and Providence are dangerous enough, but a new doctor with a lot of brand-new instruments is too much even for Champion men."

"But you are all the time grumbling about the hard work, and when we arrange a good, easy place for you, you won't take it," said Stuart, firing a parting shot as the doctor started towards the hall.

"Good, easy place! Stuart, you know I'd rather die from tumbling, Ajax and all, into an old shaft on my way to set Lew Trethven's leg the nineteenth time than petrify dead in the best hospital on earth!" retorted the doctor.

It is possible he will die that way some time, for under no persuasions would he consent to abandon his outdoor work on the ranges. For after all, was it not out there that the doctor felt the love of humanity and its hunger for love? And nothing could ever satisfy him except that. The thought of turning over the people of his "parish," as he sometimes called it, to strangers, was a thought he could not endure. He had cared for them too long, and please God, he said to himself often, as he tumbled through drifts and waded through gorges, he would still claim the privilege of calling them names and loving them.

So the short summer went swiftly by, and Stuart's plans matured so far as the building was concerned, but he confronted some new problem every day. It required all his growing steadiness of purpose, together with all of Rhena's great love for him, to keep him calm and hopeful. It was not such an easy matter to use God's money for the good of the people who were most in need of it. He had talked over a plan of profit sharing with Eric and some of the other miners, and it was one of many plans he determined to try in the near future. He was being hindered in his efforts to exercise what he had come to call his stewardship by the very men he was most eager to help. Many of the miners would not consent to any improvement in their cabins, and did not take kindly to Stuart's attempt at drainage. Added to all the rest was the ever-present factor of the saloon, which never paused in its work of destruction, and stood as a constant force to tear down any and every good work.

But as the fall came on and the great building began

to take form, and the possibilities of the future for Champion grew upon him, Stuart settled one fact very firmly and without vagueness. Whatever his plans might be, and however much he might stumble and make mistakes in the days to come, he knew that his use of money or brains or property, or whatever he possessed, was a use the account of which he owed to God. He was fully persuaded that his stewardship was a sacred thing, and a very vital part of his Christian faith, and he finally had a feeling of great peace as he rested on the conviction that he had dedicated all possessions to unselfish purposes, for the good of humanity, as far as God gave him strength and wisdom to work out the details. The special ways and means by which he was to dispense God's money was a matter which must be left to experiment and trial. The way in which the money should be used was not an important thing in comparison with his entire willingness to use it as his brother's keeper. He argued, and rightfully, that if men of capital once acknowledged that they were God's stewards, and once were willing and eager to use money and talents to the glory of God's kingdom in the earth, it would not be a difficult thing to find how best to do it. If a man wants to do God's will, the way to do it will very soon be found. The great need is that the man should first be eager to do the will.

The home he was building for Rhena and himself was built with the same idea which now pervaded his entire life. It was built for a home, but in such a way that its use would bless all Champion. If you visit Champion some day very soon, you will understand this better. No one can ever charge Stuart and Rhena with

selfish or needless luxury. But every cent used in the building of their home was spent as if they were planning to receive as their most honored guest the Lord Jesus Christ and offer him a restful hospitality after a weary day spent in the world.

That was a memorable day in the history of Champion when The Hall of Humanity was completed. The miners had a holiday, and all day long the building was thronged in all its parts by the men and their families. In the evening Stuart had planned, with the help of Andrew and Eric, to have some exercises in the nature of dedicatory services in the great hall. He had gone down early, leaving Rhena with Louise, who had been more restless than usual that day. She had, as the doctor thought she might, lingered on through the summer, gradually failing. No one had noted her condition more carefully than Rhena. She stayed with her until she became quiet, and at last left her in charge of a nurse and went down to join Stuart at the hall.

The miners' bands had been preparing for some time, at Stuart's request, to take part on this occasion. They marched into the hall early and took a position on the platform. The Salvation Army also proudly beat its way up the broad aisle, headed by the major, who, while in some doubt as to the expediency of moving into his new quarters without first breaking some of the furniture to make things look just right, had finally consented to try it as it was, and if it was too good, Stuart had arranged for the lease of the old Army Hall again.

The doctor had been caught after a long chase up into the hills, and Stuart had insisted on his being on

the platform, but could not prevail on him to offer any remarks.

"I'm no speaker. Don't ask me, Stuart. If any of the audience are sick or feel bad after you and Eric and Andrew have talked to 'em, I'll do my best for 'em; but I would only perform an operation on their skulls without using an anesthetic if I tried to talk. It would be too painful for us all. I'll agree to yell at any good points the rest of you make, if I can see 'em without a microscope."

Andrew spoke briefly on the value of the building and its opportunities for Christian service, dwelling on the fact that it was not money that would make the plan successful, but live Christian men and women, who put their hearts into the work that the hall was to represent.

Eric followed with a very strong speech. He was coming out of his disappointment and bitterness, and was almost as popular with the men as before. If he develops, he will be a stronger leader than he once ever thought of being. He declared his intention of still remaining where he was in the mines. At the close he took advantage of his opportunity to say some beautiful things of Stuart.

Stuart was the last speaker, and it was an occasion of a lifetime for any man. He was profoundly moved as he faced that audience. It was the same audience he had seen at the meetings in the square, at the railroad station, at the park, and in the hall at De Mott. The same rough, stolid, impassive crowd, with here and there a face that lighted up at some human touch as Andrew and Eric had moved it. It was the same, and yet it was

different. To Stuart it spoke of opportunities. He saw humanity so differently now.

He spoke well; very simply and in manly fashion. Rhena, proud and happy, felt that admiration for this strong, handsome man, her husband, which always adds to the depth and beauty of the love of man and wife. More than once the tears came as she listened to the way Stuart talked, voicing in a very plain fashion his great desire for the common brotherhood. The men listened with the most breathless interest. When he finished there was a hearty cheer, which was caught up again and again, while Stuart, overcome by his feelings, sat back and covered his face with his hands.

It seemed a very natural thing then for Rhena to ask all to bow their heads during a prayer. It seemed to the people that nothing could more fitly close such a day and such an occasion than Rhena herself kneeling there, with all the Salvation Army kneeling, as they used to do, around her. She had never prayed so earnestly and truly for the life abundantly to be given to them all. Even while Rhena was still upon her knees, the audience, without knowing all the reason for it, felt that this building was consecrated in a very solemn and profound sense to the humanity in honor of which it was named. And Andrew, seeing that the time had come to close the services, pronounced the benediction.

At the same hour in which Rhena had knelt down before that great silent crowd of miners, the doors of the drawing room in Aunt Royal's mansion in New York were being thrown open to one of the first events of society's season. There were gathered the butterflies of the world, diamonds and silks, sweet music and laughter;

vanity of vanity, adorned with the impressive power always apparent in a display of rich leisure, danced and ate and drank and gossiped, as if the world was all play and the main business of every man and woman was to be as free from trouble and sacrifice as possible. Aunt Royal was at her best; the trip abroad had given her jaded nerves a needed repose, and she was ready now for another season of gaiety.

"By the way," asked a young man during the evening, who had been abroad several months, "where is that charming niece of yours, Louise Duncan, who used to visit you occasionally?"

Aunt Royal paled a little. "You did not know she is quite an invalid? Yes; she is living with her brother in Champion. It is doubtful if she survives the winter. The winters in Champion are horrible. I spent one there and it nearly killed me."

"Ah! we are thankful it was only one winter! How could we have spared you here in New York?" was the gallant reply.

Aunt Royal smiled at the compliment, and the gay company, its elegance, its flowers, its perfume, its happy carelessness of the world's woe, almost shut out the picture of that agonizing figure that kneeled one night over there close by that beautiful woman at the piano and begged for—But strike up the music faster, faster; let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.

The musicians at Aunt Royal's had begun the soft, dreamy waltzes just as Stuart and Rhena came into the library of the Duncan house at Champion. They had been sent for in haste by the nurse, who had noted a

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serious change in Louise as the evening drew on. They went at once into the bedroom.

It did not need the doctor's presence already there, nor the stern look on his face, to tell them that the end was near. Louise was partly raised on pillows, and her eyes glowed with the fever of madness that had all along been consuming her.

"Come!" she cried peevishly, "we shall be late. Don't you hear the clock striking?" It made every one in the room start to hear the great clock in the hall just at that moment strike eleven.

"Come! give me my gloves and fan, and tell Jem to drive around at once. Be careful of my dress! Do I look right? The dances will be started. We shall miss the first. How slow you are! I wanted lilies of the valley, and you sent up the frisas. I don't think they are a bit pretty. Doctor, you said not to leave off my cloak when I went out to the carriage. It seems cold! What is the matter? Hark! I hear the music! Why don't they play faster? It is not fast enough."

She stopped talking, and her eyes opened wider. She seemed to see what the rest did not. Then she cried in a terrible voice: "Aunt Royal! Hal! I am going mad! I am mad! Doctor! doctor! save me!"

She fell back, and the doctor shuddered and for a second buried his face in his hands. Stuart never saw him do that before. When he lifted his head, no one asked what the end would be, for it had already come. She had died, as the doctor had really supposed she would, suddenly and painlessly. Her life had gone out like a candle flame in a winter night, when the great door of the mansion is swiftly opened and the

belated owner of the house is met by the servant in the hall.

"Tell the musicians to play a little faster," said Aunt Royal, a few minutes later, and they did so.

When morning began to come in gray and cold, Stuart was standing by the window of the bedroom as he had stood about a year before when his father died. Louise lay there, now that the life had gone, her face almost as beautiful as when Stuart saw her on his return from Europe. The jewels were still about her neck, and the bracelets on her wrists, while the frisks of which she had complained lay across her bosom.

Stuart was looking out of the window. A crowd of miners had come down the road and was standing silently in front of the mansion. He saw them there, and even in his grief he respected their purpose in coming thus early to show their sympathy before they went on down to their day's work.

He went out to the hall.

"Tell the men to come up; I shall be glad to thank them," he said to a servant.

Rhena came in. "God has given you to me," he said, "else this would be more than I could bear;" and he stood thus with his arm about her, and the tears of his humanity fell fast at the sight of that pale clay on the bed.

Then he turned towards the hall with his wife.

"God is merciful," she said. "He has given us something to live for. We will spend our all in doing his will."

"Yes," replied Stuart, "humanity, after all, is worth saving; it is worth living for. We are our brothers' keep-

ers. There is nothing better in all the world than the love of God for his children, and the love of his children for one another." And with the words he went out and shut the door upon the dead and its past; and with the woman of his love by his side faced the living and its future.

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